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**Market Orientation and Service Quality of Public Sector Sport  
and Recreation Providers: A Case Study Approach.**

by

John Beaumont-Kerridge

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

This study examines market orientation and service quality constructs within the public sector sport and recreation providers in the U.K. A preliminary review of the literature regarding marketing as a concept, its implementation and the constructs of service quality concludes that two models measure the constructs of market orientation and service quality adequately. These are the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) market orientation model and the Cronin and Taylor (1992; 1994) service quality measure. The market orientation model has been effectively linked to performance in other studies. Related studies concerning marketing in this sector have either concentrated upon generic issues, or attempts to measure service quality, but not the implementation of the marketing concept i.e. market orientation, simultaneously combined with the measurement of service quality.

This research thus attempts to fill a void in knowledge by examining the market orientation and service quality constructs, and the link to organisational performance measured directly by income, expenditure and attendance for this service sector. This is in order to make a contribution to the more effective marketing and service quality management practice for this service industry. Employing a combined research design this study investigates the dimensional structures of the two constructs and the link to performance via quantitative means. This approach also determines the existence of other related dimensions via the qualitative research methods adopted. Finally, evaluating the results against performance criteria to determine, where appropriate statistical significance. The nature of this service provision enabled staff to be used for the quantitative study to measure the market orientation and service quality constructs to gain a surrogate "customer perspective".

The two construct models proved to be reasonably robust, with many of the elements being retained in both after the iterative removal of elements via Cronbach alpha reliability tests. After principal component analysis, the dimensional constructs of both models were confirmed with the retained elements, although some dimensions subdivided due to questionnaire content (negatively worded items) and contextually specific items discovered in the service quality constructs (staff and physical facilities being considered as tangibles, but in two dimensional constructs). Multiple analysis of variance identified some significant differences between the four cases, identifying a statistically significant link with performance for market orientation and service quality against the more extreme measurements of income, and attendance. This was only for two of the dimensional constructs of "Reliability" and "Tangibles" for the service quality dimensions however but still providing a useful method to determine a "non management" perspective for these two elements. The qualitative phase identified the possibility of other important dimensions which included elements of the Narver and Slater (1990) market orientation dimensional construct, "competitor orientation" and "interfunctional coordination", and a further dimension of "resources", which is probably unique to this service sector.

It was concluded that use could be made of the statistically significant elements that were found from this study of the dimensions of market orientation and service quality as a single measurement instrument. They could provide an indicative means of identifying important measures linked to functional issues underlying the marketing processes i.e. intelligence gathering, intelligence dissemination and responsiveness, as well as effective perceptual measurements of the "reliability" and "tangibles" which make up this service provision.

# **Market Orientation and Service Quality of Public Sector Sport and Recreation Providers: A Case Study approach.**

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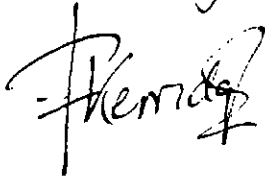
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## Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Middlesex University. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name *John Braumont-Kerridge*  


Date *April 12 2000*

## **Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The Marketing Concept.**

The role of marketing, either as a “Philosophy” or “Concept” has often been argued as a central facet of business principles; this relationship having been discussed for many years from a number of perspectives (Drucker 1968; Felton 1959; Houston 1986; Levitt 1969). The marketing concept has been suggested as being essentially a business orientation (Drucker 1968; McNamara 1972). It has now developed as a central activity of modern organisations and it is the implementation of the marketing concept which is purported to be an essential component of the suite of business activities that enable an organisation to survive and succeed (Barksdale and Darden 1971; Houston 1986; McNamara 1972; Van Egeren and O’Connor 1998).

This relationship between the philosophy of marketing, the marketing concept, their argued role and implementation within organisations has given rise to a considerable debate in the academic literature amounting to an almost incalculable number of articles. The number of definitions of marketing alone estimated at being in excess of 300 (Baker 1996). Other difficulties include the problems of the various measures of company performance, a variety of aspects of a market or marketing orientation, a diverse range of research methodologies, measures and the sample frames used have all resulted in limited validation.

It is only more recently that a theoretical framework for the implementation of the marketing concept, the market orientation (McCarthy and Perrault 1984), has been provided (Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990). This scientific

approach (Van Egeren and O'Connor 1998) has provided a stable foundation for the development of research in this area. This has therefore, given rise to a more focused discussion upon issues concerning market orientation, (Cadogan and Diamantopoulos 1995; Deng and Dart 1994; Gray et al. 1998; Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Narver et al. 1998; Slater and Narver 1994). In particular, authors have often attempted to establish a relationship between the marketing concept and business performance (Deshpande and Webster 1989; Houston, 1986; Kotler 1977; Levitt 1960; Shapiro 1988; Webster 1988). This has particularly driven many researchers to reconsider the more recent construct of market orientation against business performance for given commercial and industrial scenarios, many of whom have reported positive relationships (Deshpande et al. 1993; Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Narver, Jacobson and Slater 1993; Narver and Slater 1990; Oczowski and Farrell 1996; Pelham and Wilson 1996; Ruekert 1992; Slater and Narver 1994).

Two market orientation models have emerged from the literature over the past decade. These are the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990) constructs. Both are behaviourally based models (Cadogan and Diamantopoulos 1995) and have been used in a number of subsequent studies on the subject. It is the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model which has perhaps received a more rigorous testing, but both of these models have been tested essentially within commercial and industry areas which are primarily product based rather than services (Greenley 1995a, 1995b; Sigaw and Diamantopoulos 1994; Slater and Narver 1994). The exception, but only in part to this is the Deshpande and Farley (1998) study which incorporated some aspects of financial and other services. In this study, no differences were found between the product and services industries under study, and this lack of

differentiation was attributed to the level of aggregation of the data. Although market orientation studies to date have not differentiated between product and services, this is by no means the case with regard to the research arena of marketing and services. This aspect in relation to this study is now considered.

## **1.2 Market Orientation in a Service Setting**

A separate body of study concerning services marketing, has developed its own, albeit contested paradigms, of the role and implementation of the marketing philosophy and concept (Berry and Parasuraman 1993; Fisk et al. 1993). This division of study however is not static, and quality has been a dominant factor that has been determined to be important in relation to business performance (Buzzell and Gale 1987), and it being suggested that superior service quality assists to generate higher revenue and greater profitability (Rust et al. 1995).

In what are now considered to be classic studies, early work by Parasuraman et al. (1985) sought to develop a suitable measure for service quality, this being an approach by which service companies could develop a measure to enhance and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage. This concept has met with its supporters and critics alike, and resulted in a proliferation of articles about the service quality construct. A significant number concern the expectation/disconfirmation paradigm based SERVQUAL (PZB), and the more recent performance based SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994) models, which were an attempt to measure the dimensional construct of service quality.

### **1.3 Market Orientation and Service Quality**

Although collective wisdom suggests that marketing arrived late to the services industry, environmental changes have brought about many differences with regard to how service organisations survive (Lovelock 1995) and develop a marketing relationship with their clients (Fisk 1994). Because both market orientation and service quality constructs however would appear to have an impact on business performance, a question arises with regard to the role these two issues might have in a service setting. Due to the elements upon which these two constructs are built, this is a particular issue with regard to consumers who are in an established continuous repeat purchase situation, are likely to be in a position to influence others via word of mouth, and where overall measurement of performance can be determined by a means other than profitability. Such a setting is in the leisure industry of the public sector sport and recreation providers.

### **1.4 Public Sector Sport and Recreation Providers**

Consistent with the theme of the late arrival of the introduction of marketing to the services industry, the relationship of marketing to public sector sport and recreation providers has only developed in recent years. Marketing has however also been reported in a number of non-profit areas, to a greater and lesser degree of success. What has proved elusive over the years is the ability to measure the impact of the concepts of marketing and services quality, in the very least with regard to financial or related performance criteria. The more recent studies which have attempted to establish the dimensional constructs of market orientation and services quality enable a better, more reliable and valid measurement. What has not been evaluated however, is the simultaneous measurement of these two important constructs, and whether they

overlap, duplicate or have a dominating role over one another. This thesis therefore evaluates these two constructs and applies them to four selected public sector sport and recreation provider case studies.

## **1.5 Aims and Objectives of This Study**

The overall aim of this study is to explore the constructs of market orientation and service quality within a sample of public sector sport and recreation providers with a view to identifying useful links, if they exist, for example with regard to financial performance. This aim in turn comprises the following objectives which are measured by hypotheses developed in this thesis:

1. To confirm the dimensional construct for market orientation
2. To determine a link, if one exists between the market orientation construct and organisational performance
3. To confirm the dimensional construct for service quality
4. To determine a link, if one exists between the service quality construct and organisational performance
5. To determine the existence of other marketing or service quality dimensional constructs

The Hypotheses developed in this study are as follows:

- H<sub>1</sub>** "MARKOR" is an appropriate model for measuring the construct of Market Orientation.
- H<sub>2</sub>** Public sector sport and recreation providers that indicate Market Orientation as measured by the "MARKOR" model perform better as indicated by direct measurements of income and attendance.
- H<sub>3</sub>** "SERVPERF" is appropriate for measuring the construct of Service Quality.
- H<sub>4</sub>** Public sector sport and recreation providers that indicate good service quality as measured by "SERVPERF", perform better as indicated by direct measurements of income and attendance.

The research objectives are achieved by adopting a combined research study approach (Creswell 1998; Yin 1994). In this study, four cases are selected, and by investigation

theories of market orientation and service quality are applied and evaluated against the public sector sport and recreation provider service sector in the light of empirical study. This procedure allows the market orientation model and service quality construct measure to be presented.

## **1.6 The Structure of the Thesis**

Figure I provides a route map which gives an overview of the conceptual approach adopted in this study.

Chapter 2 reviews the definitions of marketing and the attempts to codify and implement the marketing concept, philosophy and its operationalisation. Identified also are the problems that are due to the absence of an agreed taxonomic base for this subject, such as that exists in the Sciences for example. Marketing as a subject has often been considered to be a customer focused activity. Some early definitions particularly emphasised this issue suggesting that the entire organisation activities should be directed towards the customer, not just the marketing elements. This chapter also considers some of the difficulties that have surrounded marketing as an applied discipline, particularly the vast number of definitions that have been attributed to this subject. Despite the amount of work that has been undertaken in this area by academics, marketing's status within organisations has not survived well. Some writers have also reported significant "gaps" between academic writers on the subject of marketing and the practitioners in the field. Also considered are the difficulties of measurement of marketing and success within organisations. Profit is a universally used term, but as a derived term it makes problematic any attempt to correlate this against marketing criteria.



Chapter 2 considers some of the more recent studies of the implementation of the marketing concept, evaluates their application and modified forms. The operationalisation of marketing in the public sector has grown in the last decade, from what was reported as “non existent” (Cowell 1979) to a definite presence, but patchy (Cousins 1990). This is supported by other authors (Collins and Glyptis 1992; Booth 1993; Graham 1994; Kester and Barns 1994; Walsh 1994; Dibb 1995; Doherty, Saker and Smith 1996, 1998; Day et al. 1998; Rees 1998; Wakefield and Bush 1998; Novatorov and Crompton 2001).

Discussed also is the role of marketing for public sector sport and recreation providers. Although these organisations exist within a local government framework, they rely upon their survival by attracting fee paying customers. There is therefore a need for them to be market sensitive and to employ techniques that are appropriate to this end. These would be expected to incorporate the techniques of marketing and service quality. Some studies have been conducted in this area concerning these two aspects of activity, but they have been mostly applied to a general leisure context. These have contained a mixed provision, some of which require customers to pay for a service, and others not, for example museum and library services. There have not been any studies to date which consider the public sector sport and recreation providers as a separate sector. This is despite these services being significant in terms of capital and revenue levels and also present in every local authority in the UK.

Chapter 4 considers the marketing orientation construct and provides an extant review of the literature to date concerning this attempt at a scientific approach to measure the

implementation of the marketing concept by an organisation i.e. its market orientation. Figure 2 provides an overview of the Market Orientation (and Service Quality) framework identified in this thesis.

Two major works are prominent in this area, the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990) model. Of the two constructs, the former appears to have been, to date, more extensively and rigorously tested, but in the product industry arena. Only recently is consideration being given in the literature with regard to market orientation considerations for service organisations. The two models are evaluated from the works to date reported in the literature, and the purported links to performance. It would appear that the market orientation construct has been effectively linked to a variety of financial performance criteria of organisations, but not the more abstract forms of measurement such as market share for example. An overview is provided of some of the factors which may appear to affect this link to performance. Overall, the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) market orientation construct was chosen due to it having been more rigorously tested in empirical studies.

Chapter 5 considers the measurement of the service quality as a construct, its definitions, and dimensions, and an evaluation of the problems which appear to have besieged this very elusive construct. Figure 2 provides an overview of the Service Quality (and Market Orientation) framework identified in this thesis.

The SERVQUAL model is evaluated, principally because it formed the base upon which the eventual model that was chosen for this section of the study i.e. the Cronin

and Taylor (1992, 1994) service quality construct. Theoretical, operational and other criticisms are offered, for the variety of issues which surround this subject area, which has had in excess of 3000 studies considering this subject area. What appears to be problematic are that quality measures that have been developed and apply in the product arena do not transport well to services. Other complex issues arise with regard to the use of customers in the measurement of this construct, which appear to give variable results, and in any event it is not clear from studies in this area whether or not there is as yet, a proven link to financial performance.

Chapter 6 Provides the basis of the research methodology of this study and an overview is provided in figure 3 of the full research process adopted in this thesis. A combined research design was adopted for a number of reasons. A number of authors (Cousins 1990; Collins and Glyptis 1992; Walsh 1994; Doherty et al. 1996, 1998; Day et al. 1998; Rees 1998; Wakefield and Bush 1998; Novatorov and Crompton 2001) report that marketing activity, despite its purported benefits appears to be inconsistent within this service sector. In order to identify cases which considered marketing and related activity as a high priority, but via a method which possessed a high level of internal reliability, the Analytic Hierarchy Process was adopted. This not only enabled respondents to report their perceived levels of priority for the elements of strategic marketing, strategic marketing planning and marketing management, but it also provided an "inconsistency measurement". Respondents were asked to evaluate groups of elements via a semantic differential design. Each element was considered against all others within the group. This enabled an internally valid mechanism to determine firstly the priority which respondents gave, but also whether the decisions were "consistent". This enabled the selection of four cases for further study. The

underpinning for the research design of the combined methods is also given, this being a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. This enabled effective triangulation between the data sets, and provided a richness of data, and a valid and reliable evaluation mechanism for this study. The nature of the service provision also enabled staff to be used to complete the questionnaires for the market orientation and service quality constructs. These were anticipated to act as “surrogate customers” to provide an effective means of capturing reliable and valid data.

Chapter 7 This Chapter discusses the research methods adopted in this study as identified in chapter 6, and the various stages of this study. Presented are the research instruments that are used and also the methods of analysis adopted. It begins by outlining the use of the Analytic Hierarchy Process model that was used to identify the four cases, its structure and underlying foundations. The development of the quantitative and qualitative stages are then discussed, incorporating the validity and reliability issues of the research approach.

Chapters 8, 9, and 10 report the field work findings which evaluate the propositions and critical findings developed earlier in this thesis. The analysis covers both the quantitative and qualitative elements of this study.

Chapter 11 contains the discussions which arise as a result of the fieldwork in comparison to the extant literature review. It covers the areas of the market orientation and service quality constructs, other impacting dimensions which arose from the qualitative analysis, the link of the quantitative stage to organisational performance,

and combined approaches to measuring market orientation and service quality as a result of the findings in this study.

Chapter 12 considers the hypothesis which were developed, and where support appears to be provided.

Chapter 13 provides the conclusions concerning the work of this study and covers concluding issues, methodological issues, limitations to this research and implications for further study.

Figure 1:Route Map for Chapter 1, Introduction and Overview

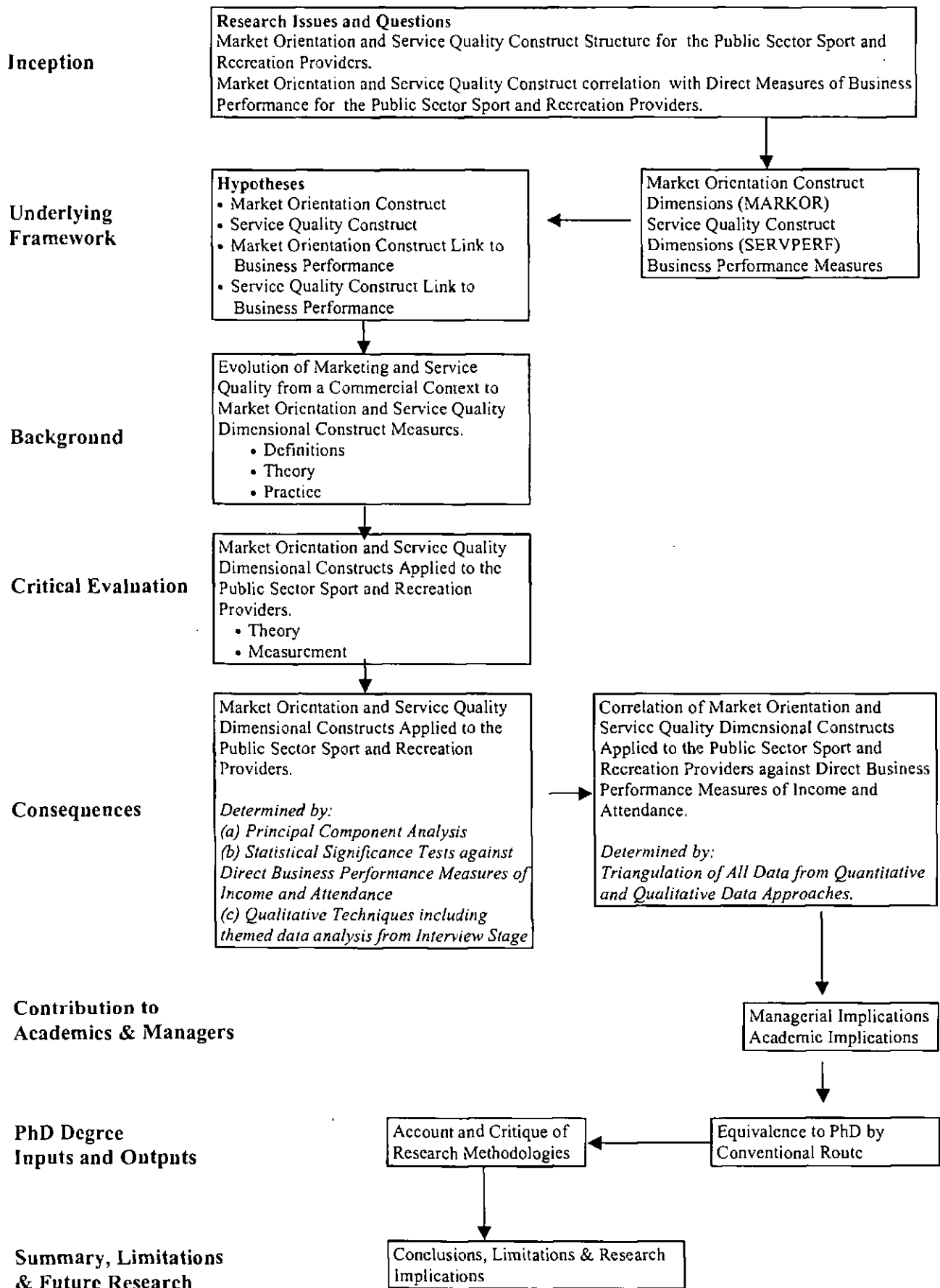
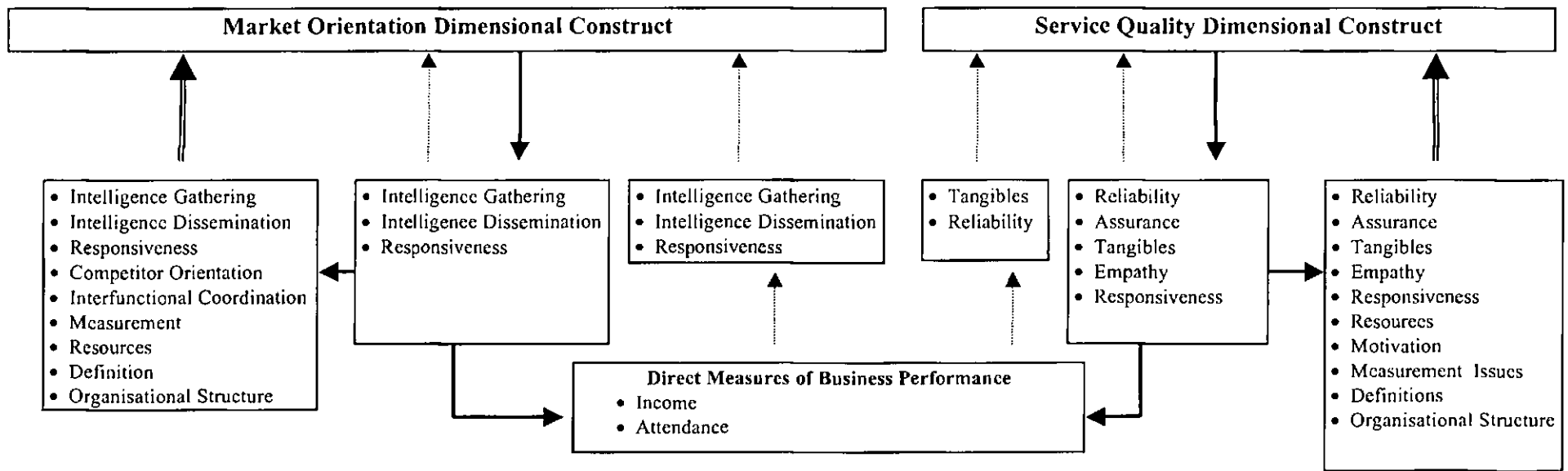


Figure 2: Market Orientation and Service Quality Framework Overview



**Figure 3: Research Process Adopted in This Thesis**

Research Phase	Objectives of Research Phase	Method	Chapter
<b>Phase I</b> <i>Secondary Research</i>	To Evaluate and Determine Research Agenda into Marketing, Market Orientation and Services Marketing in Relation to Public Sector Sport and Recreation Providers  To Evaluate and Determine Market Orientation and Service Quality Measurement Issues in Relation to Public Sector Sport and Recreation Providers	Literature Review	2  3  4  5  ↓
<b>Phase II</b> <i>Primary Research Methodology</i>	To Identify the Most Appropriate Research Strategy to Achieve Research Objectives	(a) Identify four suitable Cases via Analytic Hierarchy Process (b) Case Study Method	6  ↓
<i>Issues of Analysis and Presentation of Results</i>	To Outline the Individual Use of and Integration Methods Adopted within the Case Study Methodology	Case Study Method Integrating Market Orientation and Service Quality Quantitative and Qualitative Techniques	6  ↓
<b>Phase III</b> <i>Research Findings Comparison and Analysis</i>	To Describe the Rationale for the Analysis and Presentation of the Data Collected from the Methods Outlined		7  ↓
<i>Discussion and Evaluation of Market Orientation and Service Quality from All Data Sources</i>	Discuss the Findings of Principal Component Analysis for (a) Market Orientation and (b) Service Quality.  Discuss the Findings of the Tests of Statistical Significance against Direct Measures Business Performance, Income and Attendance for (a) Market Orientation and (b) Service Quality.  Discuss and Evaluate Emergent Themes From Data Collected via Interviews and Other Qualitative Methods Adopted.  Discuss, Evaluate and Triangulate Data from All Sources Against Business Performance Data of Income and Attendance	Integration of Findings From Each Method          Integration of Overall Findings	8  9  10       11  12  ↓
<b>Phase IV</b> <i>Conclusions</i>	Develop Overall Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research		13



## **Chapter 2    MARKETING, “A DEFINED TERM”.**

### **2.1    Introduction**

This chapter seeks to evaluate the background against which marketing has developed, from its roots as being a “customer focused activity” to more complex issues. An evaluation of the demise of the status of the marketing department is offered. This section also considers the variety of definitions which have proved problematic in establishing a firm taxonomic base, and the difficulties which the “academic” and “practitioner” perspectives have caused with regard to the application of the marketing concept. A discussion of the attempts to codify and implement the marketing concept, philosophy and its operationalisation is given and the application of marketing as applied to the public sport and recreation providers.

### **2.2    Background**

The question of “Marketing is” has long been debated by marketing scholars. The discussion has been more intense since the work of Alderson (1957). Its fundamental nature, characteristics, properties and features are variously described and defined by a large number of authors. Unlike the sciences however, they do not build upon an agreed taxonomic structure. Definitions of marketing emphasise a number of attributes. There is also what appears to be very little consensus among authors with regard to what attributes constitute an agreed formula, nor how it should be measured. Researchers have constantly been indicating the need for the development of valid and reliable measures of marketing constructs (Churchill 1979; Ray 1979). This arose from many of the discussions of marketing as a science (Hutchinson 1952; Baumol, 1957; Buzzell 1963; Taylor 1965; Hunt 1976; O’Shaughnessy and Ryan 1979; Ingebrigtsen and Patterson 1986). Although some of the studies considered marketing

as a science, the absence of a taxonomic base and established definitions created difficulties.

A significant work by Crosier (1975) reviewed some 50 marketing definitions, which culminated into classifying these into three major groupings; function, philosophy, and orientation. The first of the groupings, function, consists of the classic elements of marketing research, targeting, segmenting positioning and the use of the marketing mix and is probably the easiest to identify in organisations. The second grouping, philosophy, presents marketing as a concept applied to all areas of an organisation. This is often espoused as a “total business philosophy”. Orientation, the final category is suggested as the means by which the previous two are made possible by an organisation. Since Crosier’s (1975) review, few subsequent authors have also attempted to provide the equivalent of a taxonomical system for marketing and related areas (Perez-Rivera 1994; McKee et al. 1990), but these have not provided a generally accepted homogeneity of groupings as that of Crosier (1975). Neither have the definitions of marketing by contemporary authors provided either an homogeneity of concept upon which even a minority can agree. Indeed, some definitions do not incorporate what were previously considered as the basic requirements of the marketing concept described by important earlier works. A classic example of this was by Levitt (1960) which placed the focus of the marketing concept upon the needs of the customer. Subsequent authors suggest that the exchange process and the transactions that make up that process have taken priority within the view of the marketing concept (Bagozzi 1975; Kotler et al. 1997).

This problem is further compounded by a differential being created between the groups that are engaged in marketing activity for business and those who study the subject of marketing. Hunt (1992: p310) states "Marketing is a University discipline that aspires to be a professional discipline and that accordingly has responsibilities."

Hunt (1992: p310) gives these as:

1. To society, for providing objective knowledge and technically competent, socially responsible, liberally educated graduates.
2. To students, for providing an education that will enable them to get on the socio-economic ladder and prepare them for their roles as competent, responsible marketers and citizens.
3. To marketing practice, for providing a continuing supply of competent, responsible entrants to the marketing profession and for providing new knowledge about both the micro and macro dimensions of marketing.
4. To the academy, for upholding its mission of retailing, warehousing, and producing knowledge, its contract with society of objective knowledge for academic freedom, and its core values of reason, evidence, openness, and civility.

These four elements consider the wider view of the transactions and exchange processes of marketing, adding an important role for stakeholders. It therefore provides a framework indicating a number of publics to which "Marketing" can provide a beneficial role. It is however, devoid of a clear central tenet of marketing either as a definition or concept. A number of early marketing definitions are well known, for example:

"The function of marketing is the establishment of contact."

(Cherington 1920; quoted in Baker 1996: p5)

"Selling is preoccupied with the seller's need to convert his product into cash; marketing with the idea of satisfying the needs of the customer by means of the product and the whole cluster of things associated with creating, delivering and finally consuming it."

(Levitt 1960: p102)

“Marketing is the process whereby society, to supply its consumption needs, evolves distributive systems composed of participants, who, interacting under constraints - technical (economic) and ethical (social), create the transaction or flows which resolve market separation and result in exchange and consumption.”

(Bartels 1968: p137)

Contemporary writers provide marketing definitions as follows:

“Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create, exchange and satisfy individual organisational objectives.”

(American Marketing Association 1985: p23)

“Marketing is to establish, maintain and enhance long-term customer relationships at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is done by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises.”

(Grönroos 1990: p8)

“Marketing is a company wide commitment to providing customer satisfaction. It is also a managerial process involving the regular analysis of the firm’s competitive situation, leading to the development of marketing objectives, and the formulation and implementation of strategies, tactics, and an organisation’s control for their achievement.”

(Brooksbank 1991: p22)

“Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customers’ requirements profitably.”

(British Chartered Institute of Marketing, quoted in Wilson et al. 1992: p1)

“The process of planning and executing the various activities which are involved in selling goods, services, or ideas and which lead to an exchange between a seller and a buyer.”

(Keegan, Moriarty and Duncan 1992: p6)

“Micro marketing: is the performance of activities that seek to accomplish an organisation’s objectives by anticipation of customer or client needs and directing a flow of need-satisfying goods and services from producer to customer or client. Macro marketing: is a social process that directs an economy’s flow of goods and services from producers to consumers in a way that effectively matches supply and demand and accomplishes the objectives of society.”

(McCarthy and Perreault 1993: p8)

“Marketing consists of individual and organisational activities that facilitate and expedite satisfying exchange relationships in a dynamic environment through the creation, distribution, promotion and pricing of goods, services and ideas.”

(Dibb et al. 1994: p4)

“A social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others.”

(Kotler et al. 1997: p6)

Although the ranges of definitions are diverse, all but one has the exchange process or transactions within the tenet of the concept. An element of the consensus of marketing would appear therefore to be a set of activities that assist with transactions or exchange processes between parties (Glynn and Lehtinen 1995). Although this perception gives at the very least a common denominator approach, it only provides a minimal basis upon which to build a common meaning either to be interpreted by academic writers or applied by commercial organisations.

Bernard (1987: p73) noted this lack of trend towards a common opinion, stating: “...perhaps the more remarkable that there should appear so many (seemingly frequently incompatible) views regarding the very nature and basis of marketing.”

This therefore does not provide the same base for the development of an academic subject that has occurred in other disciplines. For example, Bernard (1987: p85) also observed:

“The development of codified principles of marketing has not represented the promulgation of new knowledge in the same way as, for example occurred with nuclear fission or space travel. No radical experimentation resulted in dramatic, visible breakthrough.”

Indeed, whereas the majority of scientific laws are not questioned except in extreme circumstances or new development, marketing definitions are often being brought into question. Classically, Levitt's (1960) marketing myopia criticised the US railroad and the US movie business for failing to move into business domains which would have maintained or improved profitability. More recent research by Morris (1990) has identified that these businesses did indeed attempt to undertake this strategic direction. They were prevented from doing so, not by failure of a marketing approach, but almost certainly due to US regulatory authorities.

### **2.3 Marketing as a Customer Focus Activity**

Drucker (1968: p54) linked marketing with company success. The emphasis of the customer was paramount, with marketing as a company wide influence: “Actually marketing is so basic that it is not just enough to have a strong sales department and to entrust marketing to it. Marketing is not only much broader than selling, it is not a specialised activity at all. It encompasses the entire business. It is the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the customer's point of view. Concern and responsibility for marketing must therefore permeate all areas of the enterprise.” This concept was still applied by writers in marketing in the 1980's. For example Goldsmith and Clutterbuck (1984: p63) state: “A prime function of the

company having as one of its major objectives, the satisfaction of the customer requirements.”

In their review of successful companies, Peters and Waterman’s (1982: p157) study of “successful practitioners” also found that they were: “...really close to their customers...and that the winners seem to concentrate on the revenue generating side.” Although not completely empirically based, these two latter studies indicate a consensus of view concerning the customer perspective. It is also noted that since the publishing of the Peter and Waterman’s text, a number of companies purported to be successful practitioners have ceased to be so, therefore not satisfying the “long term success” criteria.

Other examples of company practices, proposed that marketing, would be “...tomorrow’s competitive cutting edge,” (Michaels 1982). Similarly, King (1985) stated: “Adopting the marketing concept implies totally reorienting the whole company such that its strategic planning starts by identifying opportunities created by the potential for more effectively satisfying consumer wants. This then leads to the company’s research, development, engineering and production capabilities being aligned to developing a product and a marketing mix. This optimally matches the prior identified opportunity in the market” King’s (1985) description was applied to production orientated companies, the tangible nature of physical products lending themselves relatively easily to understanding the traditional concepts of marketing. At the end of the 1980’s, this emphasis upon the customer was also commented upon by

Baker et al. (1986: p40). Summarising upon a variety of marketing studies, it was suggested that the works had resulted in disparate emphases producing:

“...a pervasion that of a rather vague notion that marketing has something to do with putting customers’ first in the minds of everybody in the company.”

## **2.4 Marketing as an Applied Discipline**

Many of the modern industrial processes, which have been the foundation of western society’s material development, have begun as scientific experiments by academics. This is not a recent phenomenon, it being a process that has been in existence for a considerable period. As new scientific developments took place over the years, altering the perception of knowledge, inventions of better mechanical sophistication were produced to replace the earlier versions. The process and development of scientific theory to industrial development was therefore tangibly clear. The scientific base being described in many cases was in terms of laws, and its content far from being disputed was used as foundation for further development and enhancement of products and processes.

This same process cannot be said to exist for the arena of marketing. The goal of sustainable competitive advantage for companies has been determined as important (O’Shaughnessy 1995; Johnson and Scholes 1999) and that the adoption of the marketing concept was one such approach to gaining sustainable competitive advantage. There have been however, clear differences between the marketing concept as espoused by academic scholars, and that considered by the practitioner (Hunt 1992). Myers (1979: p62), supporting indirectly the concept of competitive advantage via marketing argued “Marketing is a ‘Professional discipline’ and not an



'academic discipline'. Marketing academicians should recognise that the overall importance of research and knowledge development in this field, over the short-run or long run, is to improve marketing practice and decision-making, and in general, to advance the state of knowledge useful to the profession." In suggesting that the goals and direction of academic researchers should be focused upon the needs of marketing practitioners, this implies that a difference of opinion exists between the objectives of the marketing academic scholar and the practitioner.

Baker et al. (1986: p41) commented on this observed differential, stating: "Perhaps the most perplexing aspect of the 'Marketing Concept' is the apparent difficulty experienced by those trying implement it. The 'Gap' between theory and practice seems to originate from the fact that practitioners do not see marketing as a means of solving their everyday business problems." This apparent dichotomy between the marketing academic and the marketing practitioner sees the role of the former moving away from the needs of the business forum, whilst the marketing practitioner does not appear to value the study and application of the marketing concept. Recent literature has attempted to bridge the gap between the view of the marketing scholar and organisational perspectives (Piercy and Morgan 1990; Brownlie and Saren 1992; Piercy 1997).

The lack of clarity of the relationship between marketing academics and practitioners however, combined with the absence of an agreed taxonomic base upon which to develop a marketing paradigm, have not helped to alleviate the confusion concerning this dichotomy. This apparent difference between academics and practitioners

regarding the marketing concept and its application to the commercial and other environments however has had no restraining effect upon the methods which organisations within the marketplace have sought to gain sustainable competitive advantage and where appropriate, profit. It could be argued that from the practitioners' perception, marketing as an activity has taken place since the first exchange of goods and services took place.

One of the earliest recorded "Marketers" concerning the formalised concept of marketing was reported by Drucker (1968: p53), citing "Cyrus McCormick": "The first man to see marketing clearly as a unique and central function of the business enterprise, and the creation of a customer as the specific job of management, was Cyrus McCormick. The history books mention only that he invented a mechanical harvester. But he also invented the basic tools of modern marketing: market research and market analysis; the concept of market standing; modern pricing policies; the modern service salesman; parts and service supply to the customer and instalment credit. He is truly the father of business management. And he had done all this by 1850. It was not until 50 years later, however, that he was widely imitated even in his own country."

The ultimate purpose of this business approach was to gain sustainable competitive advantage. Marketing is but one process among many in the commercial environment. If the pluralistic nature of organisations is accepted and marketing is not the pre-eminent force but one of several important functions, then effecting any form of organisational change becomes a complex political and mechanical process. This is

unlikely to be driven by sophisticated market analysis or intelligence alone (Brownlie and Saren 1992).

Marketing ideology in its various forms, when present, although identified as an essential competitive tool within companies, is normally considered to be an operational component of the larger corporate or business strategy. As a result it is alongside other functional elements such as operations, finance, human resources etc. (Webster 1988). The use of marketing is often only seen as an operational tool and therefore seen competing with other business disciplines (Lorenz 1986). Consequently, marketing does not usually provide the choice of strategic direction. External measures, such as market share often provide this.

Even measuring what appears to be the most basic of marketing issues, that of “satisfying customer requirements profitably” is a compound, externally derived item. The methods of obtaining reliable and valid data of such customer requirements are complex. Matching these to fiscal measures such as turnover are difficult. A variety of individual circumstances, for example asset acquiring policies, can cause the methods of profit calculation to vary from company to company. Comparisons to indirect fiscal measures such as profit in terms of equating successful marketing practice is tenuous. Further to this, the majority of Western government administrations require detailed annual financial returns for limited companies, or companies limited by guarantee. For example, within the UK these are underpinned by complex statutes, and are almost exclusively financial in their nature, reporting the activities of a company.

This emphasis has led to marketing and its method of general reporting being sublimated to a second tier importance compared to the financial reviews.

## **2.5 The Demise of the Value of Marketing as an Activity**

In the competitive arena of workplace disciplines, the confusion of marketing and its measurement, along with the other difficulties stated have not assisted in the promotion of marketing as a worthwhile activity. Despite this, the marketing concept has remained a powerful and consistent ideology "...but, as with analogy of monetarism and Marxism, this does not mean that it (the adoption of the marketing concept) is correct." (Brownlie and Saren 1992: p38).

Marketing is but one of many processes which occur in organisations and by itself could not provide a complete answer to corporate success. Further to this, the linkage of marketing to organisational business processes has not been integrated either easily or with clarity. Bonoma (1985: p24) stated: "...marketing for a number of years has been long on advice about what to do in a given competitive or market situation and short on useful recommendations for how to do it within a company, competitor and customer constraints...experiences with both managers and students argue strongly that these parties are often strategy-sophisticated and implementation-bound." Classic marketing textbooks have also reported upon, and identified this problem of implementation (Kotler et al. 1996; O'Shaughnessy 1995). Piercy (1986: p285) identified three areas that were apparent barriers which marketing executives experienced. These were:

1. The diversity of organisational structures in which marketing executives operate and the impact of conflicts of interests with other functions.
2. The interaction between organisational structure and the effectiveness of marketing activities.
3. The manipulation of marketing information.

The pluralistic nature of organisations also provides a competitive environment in which often it is the political processes that determine which organisational functions take precedence. There has therefore been a lowering of perceived value of marketing since the mid 1980's as a business activity which has been reported by a number of authors (Brownlie and Saren 1992; Gummerson 1987; McKenna 1991; Nilson 1992; Rapp and Collins 1990; Thomas 1993). It appears therefore that a growing number of writers are observing a lowering in the perceived value of the traditional concept of marketing. There have been some reports of a general adoption of the marketing concept. For example Cavanagh and Clifford (1986) noted that a customer orientation emphasis as a philosophy was evident by being highlighted within the written mission statements of many successful companies.

This bland view however has not gained wide recognition as general practice within commercial organisations and other writers have been more critical with regard to the uptake of marketing by organisations, identifying a significant difference in the nature of marketing activity currently undertaken with that of the much wider arena suggested in 1960 by Levitt (Lorenz 1986). This study noted that marketing had only really been extensively adopted in the packaged goods industry, other industries only employing a restricted range of the marketing techniques available. O'Connor and Galvin (1997: p12) provided five serious criticisms of the use of marketing by companies as follows:

1. Existing customers are continually short-changed.
2. Promotional resources continue to be squandered needlessly.
3. The traditional brand - management system can now no longer cope.
4. Marketing departments are not coming up with new ideas.
5. Marketing fails to leverage the strengths of the company.

This view on the apparent lack of marketing efficacy coincides with a perception of the demise of the status of marketing within organisations. Day (1992: p323) states: "Marketers appear comfortable with the assertion that marketing should play the lead role in charting the strategic direction of a business. The logic behind this assertion is straightforward. Strategic planning is about keeping the business in step with the anticipated environment, and marketing has traditionally served as the boundary function between the firm, its customer, channel and competitor environment. It follows that marketing should have the most to say about the match of the competencies of the business with the opportunities to exploit and threats to avoid. However, their business functions and academic disciplines don't share this assumption and have been actively eroding the influence of marketing in the strategy dialogue." This provides a dichotomous view about the role of marketing and its relative value.

Notable failures however, attributed to marketing reported in the academic press also have not assisted in marketing's perceived value. For example Ricks (1993) lists and describes a large number of blunders, which resulted in either loss of profit or serious embarrassment. Larger, more successful companies with the greater resources to devote to marketing would be expected not to have such difficulties and possess successful and effective marketing activities. This is not the case as cited by Ricks

(1993), who cites many prestigious blue chip companies that encountered significant marketing difficulties including Hoover and McDonalds.

A cornerstone of industrially developed countries, and an important test is that of confidence by shareholders, who can voice their opinion in classic supply and demand of shares for publicly listed companies. Value can be reflected by the rating of the shares themselves or their movements between owners, example reports discussing the results of marketing activity are not always positive:

“...of 432 large companies in the US found that, in many cases, value was being destroyed rather than being created.” (The Economist Dec 1995: p35)

“General motors in the decade from 1980 to 1990 lost nearly \$100 million in shareholder value, and similarly Ford managed to lose £25 million.” (O’Connor and Galvin 1997: p 9).

Other economic factors may have affected the share value of Ford and General Motors. There are however, many other motor manufacturers. Some are very small, without the large resources to spend on marketing activity, which were not in recession at the time. Piercy (1997: p5) while discussing the changing role of marketing, stated: “...basically, traditional marketing is dead in the water.” Brown (1995: p27) however considers that the essence of the marketing fabric for an organisation is set at a more subtle level and states: “There are now two types of corporation: those with a marketing department and those with a marketing soul. Even a cursory glance at the latest Fortune 500 shows that the latter are the top performing companies, while the former, steeped in the business traditions of the past, are fast disappearing.” This observation was not unique amongst marketing practitioners and academics The status of the marketing department within companies appearing to

become more untenable as a result of apparent and perceived conflicting pressures both internal and external to organisations.

## **2.6 The Status of the Marketing Department**

The presence of marketing in an organisation in the 1980s was normally within a marketing department (Piercy 1995). The activity of marketing had been reported as having become marginalised. "It is relatively, and probably increasingly, rare in real organisations to encounter the integration of all marketing activities under a single all-powerful marketing director and organisation. For example, the evidence suggests that decisions like advertising spend and allocation are decided in the boardroom not the marketing department. Frequently, the main movers on price are accountants and chief executives, not marketing executives. Distribution (and often customer service) decisions are made elsewhere in the company. Issues of quality and service often exclude marketing 'specialists', particularly when key account management operates outside the marketing area." (Piercy 1995: p44).

This view of the problematic role and status of marketing with respect to the other major functions is not new. For example, Anderson (1982: p18) had prophetically stated: "Strategic conflicts will arise as functional areas vie for the financial resources necessary to occupy their optimal long-term positions, corporate management as the final arbitrator may occasionally favour one area over another. Indeed, it is possible that marketing considerations may not have a significant impact on strategic plans unless marketers adopt a strong advocacy position within the firm. In order to ...adopt a strong advocacy within a firm, marketing as an activity requires at least clearly perceived benefits, and this has not occurred." Although not explicit about the



benefits, these are implied to be tied to the profit motive. Anderson (1992) and Piercy (1995) do not consider the possibility of measuring the processes of marketing, rather advocating the need to establish the perceived results of the activity.

Without these clearly identified benefits, the political processes that establish the priority of functions within the pluralism of interests that determine the strategic direction of an organisation, it is difficult to conceive how marketing could hold its status against the other disciplines. Pfeffer (1981) considers resource dependence theory and presents an argument for a “constituency-based theory of the firm” where the strategic planning influence varies with regard to the importance of the resource held and contributed. The discipline of marketing under this scenario, holding no tangible assets in comparison to finance and Marketing would therefore lose out. A view given by a major accountancy company, Coopers and Lybrand contained within a study in 1993, identified difficulties of marketing as:

1. Undertaking an ill-defined mixture of activities.
2. Being short sighted and missing business opportunities.
3. Lacking clearly defined responsibilities and accountability.
4. Rarely leading the drive to enhance business performance.

The lack of responsibility of tangible assets could have a direct bearing upon items (1) and (3), resultant decision making being made as a consequence of internal company political processes. Under this scenario, assignment of important issues such as leadership of major projects assigned to a marketing group would be unlikely (item 4). Also, the weakness of being unable to measure the marketing function would prevent key decision makers linking marketing to business performance.

In supporting a political influence within a company however, Anderson (1982: p19) suggested a clear role for a marketing group within a company: "...the chief responsibility of the marketing area is to satisfy the long-term needs of its customer coalition" and further stated: "...marketing's role in strategic planning must be that of a strong advocate for the marketing concept." This view was similar to other writers, and has not been clearly translated over the years into the form of a causal linkage of marketing activity to business performance by companies.

Recognising the complex and political processes that occur, a number of reasons have been cited in the literature for the inhibitory effects upon the creation of marketing organisations. These include: structure (Weitz and Anderson 1981), power (Pfeffer 1981), interactions with other groups (Walker and Ruekert 1987; Wind 1982) and bureaucratic issues such as formality, centralisation and standardisation (Ruekert et al. 1985).

The resultant demise of the perceived importance of marketing, the lack of clarity of the marketing concept and definitions, have all contributed to a considerable debate over the value of marketing as a discipline and the role, existence and function of a marketing organisation. As a consequence, decisions are made by some companies to consider whether a marketing group should even exist (Piercy 1995).

Notwithstanding the majority of the criticisms of marketing, as a function, a philosophy or of the marketing organisation, research studies into this subject have generally however, been qualitative in their approach. The previously cited comments

are also often holistic in their perspective, which does not assist in identifying a remedy or replacement for the systems or procedures that have been in place within companies, often for a significant number of years. If marketing is to have value, one of the basic premises therefore would be the ability to measure success or failure against its activity.

## **2.7 Marketing and the Measurement of Success**

The studies that have attempted to measure the uptake of marketing in its various forms have been via qualitative measures of which the literature is replete with examples of the apparent lack of, or the limited diffusion of the adoption of the marketing concept (Webster 1981; Ames 1970; Hise 1965; McNamara 1972; Morgan and Morgan 1991; Whittington et al. 1994; Graham 1995). Some studies have claimed to show an adoption of the marketing concept, for example Liu (1995), who found an association between firm size and extent of adoption. This contrasts against other studies however, (Meziou 1991) who argued that smaller companies were adopting the marketing concept. These two examples typically show the lack of consensus amongst academic scholars over this topic.

Many different problems are cited where studies have specifically investigated the poor diffusion of the marketing concept within organisations. One major conclusion drawn however is the requirement for the marketing philosophy to pervade all of the organisation and transcend any functional department or title. Organisational barriers and company culture have, amongst other issues, been claimed to have prevented this (Lorenz 1986).

Until relatively recently (pre 1990) there has been a lack of quantitative approaches within the generically used marketing related analysis tools to effectively equate marketing activity with success in the marketplace. Even as early as the 1960's, measurement for marketing was characterised by concepts, rather than by quantitative measurement methods. For example, Bartels (1962) identified a number of dimensions upon which marketing could be measured. These were:

1. The Intellectual Dimension, indicating the extent of its development along scientific and philosophic lines.
2. The Temporal Dimension, indicating its relationship to the times in which it has evolved.
3. The Spatial Dimension, indicating its correlation with other social sciences.
4. The Interdisciplinary Dimension, indicating its correlation with other social sciences.
5. The Ethical Dimension, indicating its co-ordinancy with ethical and spiritual concepts in human thought.
6. The Spiritual Dimension,, indicating the extent to which the development of marketing thought coincides with the spiritual forces unfolding in the world.

These follow the lineage of marketing as a philosophy, but it is difficult to see at first glance how the business community could consolidate these easily into effective management procedures, measured by linked input and output dimensions.

Other writers also have maintained a qualitative philosophic or conceptual approach, even though the business community has required more pragmatism. Various measurement methods that exist within commercial organisations are not often based upon marketing driven parameters. In a classic production company, product stock levels, rate of production, work in process etc. can and are all measured by time, number and monetary value. Individual employees are also often all measured on a unit output basis. This is often combined with quality assessment that also measures whether or not the product items are meeting the required pre-determined specifications. These may, or may not, be integrated with customer specifications.

Finance has a number of measurement methods. Within the UK there are the required annual statutory measurements to produce information for Companies House. Annual returns are compulsory, and failure to comply can result in heavy financial and criminal penalties. The statutory tools are comprehensive, covering a number of Acts and supplementary orders by various secretaries of state. Against this background, financial and related measurements vary with there being almost no standards or benchmarks set. Even the basic criterion of simple cash flow for detailing income against expenditure is overlooked in some instances, resulting in bankruptcy (Brock et al. 1986).

The voluntary process within organisations of performance measurement produces a number of approaches. The most common marketing performance indicators, according to Day (1990) and Greenley (1995a), are market share and profitability. Other forms of measurement include, return on investment (RoI), return on sales (RoS), management accounts measures, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, purchase intent and perceived quality. The benchmarks of measurement are also not static. Corporate performance, when combined with marketing factors is problematical (Rhyne 1986; Chakravarthy 1986). RoI for example, may be good in one industry area, and only mediocre in another. Improvements to RoI may therefore be attributed to many factors within a company including marketing.

## **2.8 Summary**

Marketing measurement methods would also appear to be of a descriptive nature and often provide correlative data, not the causal relationships sought that would create the link between marketing activity and a firms markets. The absence of such causally

linked quantitative measures may be a contributory factor with regard to the fall in the perceived value of marketing as an activity. This lack of measurement prevents the ability to measure marketing activity as a value against business performance. Marketing related measures also are unable to eliminate uncertainty, either due to bias of judgement, environmental elements or competitor actions (Rao and Steckel 1995).

Despite this apparent confusion regarding the definitions, applications, status and measurement of marketing, the number of writers and journals this subject has to its credit still indicate that it holds significant importance (Baker 1996). The translation of marketing into a business activity, or philosophy: "...centre around the various academic and practitioner attempts to codify, define or redefine the "marketing concept" (Harris 1996: p21).

## **Chapter 3 THE MARKETING CONCEPT**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The marketing concept has been widely discussed, particularly since the 1950's. Such writers as Levitt (1960) and Kotler (1967) have enhanced its status. Since these early times, this concept has been discussed quite extensively in the literature (Felton 1959; Keith 1960; King 1965; Hise 1965; Bell and Emory 1971; McNamara 1972; Webster 1981; Austen 1983; Wensley 1990). It has been upheld as a methodology to improve corporate success (Kotler et al. 1996; Kotler and Levy 1973; Kotler and Zaltman 1971) as well as a reason for company failure (Bennett and Cooper 1979, 1981, 1982; Hayes and Abernathy 1980; Michaels 1982; and Hirschman 1983). Marketing as a philosophy however, does not clearly provide the management rubrics of how to implement and maintain the marketing approach. Consequently, this delineates marketing into the main areas of the marketing function, the marketing concept, and the operational implementation of marketing in its various forms.

### **3.2 Marketing Concept Defined**

The marketing function can be considered to consist of some or all of marketing's components. The marketing concept on the other hand consists of all aspects of marketing combined to create a group or class of objects with its own identity. Felton (1959) provided the following early definition: "A corporate state of mind that exists on the integration and co-ordination of all of the marketing functions which, in turn, are melded with all other corporate functions, for the basic objective of producing maximum long range profits." This provides a platform to consider that the adoption of the marketing concept relies upon all the marketing functions being encompassed, but integrated to the other major corporate elements. It does assume also a major

corporate goal is the successful achievement of the profit motive. This differs from the earlier discussion in which marketing is seen as one of a number of business functions, which competes for importance in a pluralistic system.

The marketing concept as such has remained reasonably robust over the years as shown by the definitions and descriptions of contemporary authors, who essentially do not differ from these early definitions of which the following are examples:

“The Marketing Concept holds that achieving organisational goals depends on determining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors do.”

(Kotler et al. 1996: p15)

“The marketing concept means an organisation aims all its efforts at satisfying its customers - at a profit.”

(McCarthy and Perreault 1993: p34)

“The marketing concept stresses consumer orientation, long run profitability, and integrating marketing functions with other corporate functions.”

(Zikmund and d’Amico 1996: p20)

“The marketing concept is a corporate orientation to business that starts with consumers and integrates marketing into every other corporate function.”

(Keegan, Moriarty and Duncan 1992: p20)

These all-encompassing approaches are seen by some as essential to success, extending to all parts of an organisation. “Thus, whilst the marketing functions are important, it is the adoption of the marketing concept that is a prerequisite to their successful implementation. The marketing concept can be adopted not only by people in marketing functions, but also by others in other specialisms, for example,



accountants, production staff designers, etc.” (Lorenz 1986: p12). A utopian ideal, but Lorenz (1986) was also critical of the extent of the adoption of the marketing concept, implying that for other industries there was a lack of clarity or definition over the marketing concept and marketing tools.

The poor diffusion of the supposed beneficial marketing concept is difficult to understand given the stated benefits by many authors. Lorenz (1986) gives two reasons; firstly that the marketing concept is harder to understand than its functions, and secondly is the confusion of market research and the domination by it. An additional possibility is the difficulty of integrating the various functions and professions within a firm. The marketing concept requires that all corporate functions are melded. This is a significant task in organisations driven by complex internal demands and political pressures (Piercy 1995).

Earlier work in this area considered the difficulties of the uptake of the marketing concept. McNamara (1972: p52) reviewing consumer and industrial goods manufacturers, specifically considered the marketing concept across two major dimensions; adoption and orientation. Adoption was stated as: “...whether a company has embraced the concept’s philosophical implications for business management.” This placed the marketing concept very clearly as a part of the business philosophy, not as one replacing it. Implementation was stated as: “...the specific organisational methods for incorporating this philosophy into actual business practice.” This latter dimension was an early recognition of the marketing concept’s operationalisation, which had been identified as a weakness by this work.

McNamara (1972: p53) defined the marketing concept as: "...a philosophy of business management, based upon a company-wide acceptance of the need for customer orientation, profit orientation, and recognition of the important role of marketing in communicating the needs of the market to all major corporate departments." Interestingly, this definition was given at the time without reference almost in the style of an accepted norm.

There was a subtle difference from Felton's (1959) definition of the marketing concept that resulted in a lowered perception of the marketing concept's status, from an integrative to a communications role. The former would place the role of the marketing function at the centre of decision making processes, whereas the latter would be one of influence and persuasion with a much lower status. The resulting management difference is therefore significant with regard to the implementation and operationalisation of the marketing concept and its resultant position and function within an organisation. The next section will therefore consider aspects of the operationalisation of the marketing concept in the public sector.

### **3.3 The Operationalisation of the Marketing Concept in the Public Sector**

From the earlier discussion concerning the marketing concept, underpinning this important element is the exchange process (Alderson 1957; Bagozzi 1975; Kotler et al. 1996). This is defined by Kotler et al. (1996: p9) as consisting of the following:

1. There are at least two parties.
2. Each party has something that might be of value to the other party.
3. Each party is capable of communication and delivery.
4. Each party is free to accept or reject the offer.
5. Each party believes it is appropriate or desirable to deal with the other party.

Kotler et al. (1996) views that exchange is one of marketing's units of measurement. It does not however allow comparisons to be made easily against such broad criteria.

In terms of broadening the domain of the marketing concept however, the concept of "exchange" as a mechanism of measurement introduces problems from earlier concepts, particularly those of Kotler and Levy (1969). In this earlier 1969 article, it was suggested that the marketing concept could be beneficially applied to other non-business activities. Examples were given such as a police department and a school using television to heighten its status. This approach however was not new, Wiebe (1951-2: p679) posed the question of: "why can't you sell brotherhood like you sell soap", which was simply resolved at the time as "you can" This widened the scope of marketing to including societal issues, not just remaining within the domain of the commercial environment.

The difficulty with this universal application of the marketing concept to some non-profit activity lay in two issues; firstly in the definition of the exchange process, and secondly with the proposition of the consumer orientation as its base. Kotler et al. (1996) states that the exchange process can exist in two forms, monetary exchange and barter. This implies a determinable and tangible return from both sides. Some non-profit activity does not require payment. In fact, some could be considered to be a determinably measured return of exchange in only one direction e.g. religion.

There does arise however at this point a fundamental issue with regard to the of marketing of services (discussed in more detail later in this thesis). On the face of it, regarding the issues of exchange and the definitions of marketing, there is little difference between the consumer paying for a theatre seat, or the individual going to church. Concerning the second issue of the customer orientation, the providing organisation meets its objectives by identifying potential customers' needs, and by keeping abreast of these to maintain a supply of appropriate goods and services. This method theoretically enables a company to maintain a profitable relationship over a long period of time (Baker et al. 1986).

Societal issues involving social change do not however normally involve this exchange process, i.e. needs and wants are not identified to modify or refine products or services to match consumer needs, as happens in the economic exchanges of the business market. Often, quite the reverse process is adopted, and an approach is taken to persuade the consumer what is best for them (Lauffer 1984). The beneficiaries of this process are often not those who are exposed to the supposed marketing process. Classic contemporary examples of these are the Aids and safer driving campaigns. Adoption by recipient audiences of the principles given in these campaigns, do provide benefit, but not necessarily directly to the target audience. The benefit of this process is therefore to someone beyond the campaign's watching audience i.e. those who are not infected with HIV because of the safer sex practices, or those prevented from being involved in a road traffic accident due to safer driving.

The degree to which the implementation of the marketing concept, and how it would purportedly benefit the activity of a non profit organisation has not been clearly established, and would depend for example upon the nature of the service provider. Within this category, the sport and recreation providers of the public sector are an example which require customers to pay directly for the service that is provided. Provision and use of these facilities by customers is therefore based upon a commercial model, which can be influenced by marketing methods (Cowell 1979; Collins and Glyptis 1992).

### **3.4 Marketing and the Public Sector Sport and Recreation Services**

Local Government is one part of the very large public sector provision in the UK. This sector accounts for approximately one quarter of the central government expenditure of the UK which amounts to some £80.3 billion in 1998, of which Sport and Recreation as provided by Local Government in the U.K. accounts for approximately 2% of this total (£1.6 billion) (Torkildsen 1999). This is substantive in both value and provision.

Many authors have emphasised the benefits of marketing, and the need for non profit organisations to use these techniques (Kotler and Levy 1969; Mokwa 1981; Cousins 1990; Kotler and Andreason 1991; Loveday 1991; Collins and Glyptis 1992; Booth 1993; Graham 1994; Kester and Barns 1994; Walsh 1994; Doherty, Saker and Smith 1996, 1998; Day et al. 1998; Rees 1998; Wakefield and Bush 1998; Novatorov and Crompton 2001). Research concerning marketing issues do not often however differentiate between various types of public sector organisations. This diversity has

in itself presented problems with regard to the application of marketing. Smith (1988) differentiates public sector organisations which may be driven by market forces and argues that best use for these can be made by integrating and developing proactive marketing activity to benefit strategic decision making.

The discretionary provision of sport and recreation services by Local Government in England and Wales, and the part financing by charging for facilities has resulted in a “quasi market sensitive” approach. As a result, although the benefits of marketing have been reported in the leisure market as provided in the public sector, the development of the use of marketing in this arena has not been consistent (Smith 1988; Doherty et al. 1996). Studies by Smith (1988) and Cowell (1979) were critical of the uptake of marketing within sport and recreation centres.

Other writers at the time were not so confident of the role of marketing in such an environment, Luck (1969) considered such logic as dangerous and believed it would lead to both the dilution and discrediting of marketing. This was not a consensus view at the time however, other writers suggesting that marketing as relevant in the context of the British non-profit sector (Oulton 1983). Other studies also reviewed non-profit bodies such as the post office (Wesil 1975) and libraries (Condous 1983), finding marketing techniques to be a positive benefit to service provision. Smith (1988) concluded that it was where marketing could be applied best to the public sector, rather than whether it could be applied at all .

Early studies in the public sector sport and recreation market indicated problems with regard to the uptake of marketing techniques, and Cowell (1979) concluded:

1. Most centres did not have objectives or they were “vague, non-operational, and idealistic”.
2. Planning activity was, as a result, vague.
3. Demand assessment through customer surveys was rare.
4. Dividing the market into segments was limited to broad socio-demographic groups or by time and activity slots rather than based on customer’s preferences or benefits to the provider.
5. No manager had control over pricing which was set by the Council.
6. Promotional benefits were small and channels limited.
7. As a consequence of the above, performance evaluation was very subjective.

Later studies in this area discovered that marketing techniques had improved. Cousins (1990) reported that marketing, and in particular marketing planning was more likely to be carried out in the public sector, but that its (marketing) presence was “patchy”. Doherty et al. (1996, 1998) also concluded a much more positive view with regard to the uptake of marketing than when the public sector leisure industry was surveyed by Cowell (1979), finding that some sport and recreation providers undertake a high level of marketing activity. This is confirmed by others (Collins and Glyptis 1992; Booth 1993; Graham 1994; Kester and Barns 1994; Walsh 1994; Dibb 1995; Day et al. 1998; Rees 1998; Wakefield and Bush 1998; Novatorov and Crompton 2001).

The nature of the sport and recreation provision via the local authorities does mean that uptake is not uniform across the UK. Adoption of marketing techniques is dependant upon the decision making body of the local authority and the means to implement it by management. This complex mechanism does not permit an easy search to identify those organisations purporting to embrace the implementation of the

marketing concept. Amongst the plethora of activities undertaken by management, there is a need for a mechanism to identify public sector sport and recreation organisations which place marketing on a high priority, to be able to determine subsequently whether this is the case.

### **3.5 Summary**

The preceding chapters have indicated that the literature focusing upon marketing, marketing as a philosophy and marketing as a concept is far from homogenous in both industrial and public sector industries. Further to this, there appears to be a rift between practitioners and academics with regard to the perceptions of the use, value and operationalisation of marketing in its various forms. Other difficulties have also been observed such as implementation problems, changes in the priority and an apparent lowering of the status of marketing organisation within companies. Such negative reports and studies over the time scale of some 50 years would usually lead to a general consensus that marketing was not an activity that could be positively attributed to business success. This difficulty is not unexpected, since marketing provides a scenario “what to do” but not “how to do it” in management terms and functions. The methods of implementation and maintenance of this activity within companies are determined mostly by political processes, especially because almost all are in a pluralistic setting.

The pursuit of a reliable and valid causal link between marketing and business success has eluded academics and practitioners alike, although this has not prevented many of the latter to earn significant sums of money in the pursuit of a business goal via



supposed “marketing approaches”. It has also not stopped many from suffering significant losses of income due to classic marketing blunders (Ricks 1993).

Difficulties have also been experienced in translating marketing as an activity to public sector services. Studies had advocated both positive and negative effects on the uptake of marketing by such organisations. Early studies also considered that public sector was one homogeneous organisation, to which management, marketing and related processes could be uniformly applied . More recent studies have however segmented the public sector, identifying some that would be more likely to benefit from a marketing approach to the provision of their service. The public sector sport and recreation provision is one such example.

Early studies however, were mostly qualitative in their approach to establish or verify the marketing concept’s operationalisation level in an organisation. More recent studies (post 1990) have attempted to articulate a more scientific and quantitative measurement method for the measurement of the adoption of the marketing concept. This topic is now considered next.

## **Chapter 4 THE MARKET ORIENTATION CONSTRUCT**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapters evaluated the difficulties experienced in the various attempts to codify and implement the marketing concept. This chapter builds upon this by considering the various important works in this area by considering market orientation construct models, and various subsequent modified forms. The relation of the market orientation to the elusive business orientation link is also considered, as well as factors which affect this link. The purpose is therefore to identify a suitable method for measuring the level of adoption of the marketing concept by public sector sport and recreation providers.

### **4.2 Background**

The evolution of marketing is suggested as; “progression from production orientation, to sales orientation, to product orientation and finally to marketing orientation” (Wong and Saunders 1993: p20). These indicate the orientation of the organisation with regard to the needs and wants of the consumer (Kotler et al. 1996). More recently, studies have investigated market orientation in more depth. These can be grouped under five major headings:

1. Studies which have reported on the extent of the adoption of the market or marketing orientation (Barksdale and Darden 1971; Dunn, Birley and Norburn 1986; Greenley and Matcham 1986; Hise 1965; McNamara 1972; Meziou 1991; Norburn, Bierly, Dunn and Payne 1990; Parasuraman 1983; Peterson 1989).
2. Studies which explore the relationship between market or marketing orientation and output i.e. profitability, customer orientation, or resource attraction (Day and Nedungadi 1994; Naidu and Narayana 1991; McCullough, Heng and Khem 1986; Narver and Slater 1990; Pelham and Wilson 1996; Ruekert 1992; Qureshi 1993; Wong and Saunders 1993).
3. Studies which have sought to develop a scale for measuring market or marketing orientation (Kohli et al. 1993; Narver and Slater 1990; Wrenn 1996; Wrenn, LaTour and Calder 1994).

4. Studies which have attempted to identify and determine the moderating effects of environmental influences which affect market or marketing orientation's performance (Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Slater and Narver 1994).
5. A study which investigated the different forms of market or marketing orientation (Greenley 1995b).

The consistent interest in this field has centred on establishing the benefits of a market orientation (Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Day and Nedunadi 1994). Benefits have been reported to include improving internal performance (Sigaw, Brown and Widing 1994), as well as organisational performance generally (Narver and Slater 1990; Naidu and Narayana 1991; Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Day and Nedunadi 1994; Slater and Narver 1994; Pelham and Wilson 1996).

More recently however, models have been developed to measure a "market orientation" (Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Slater and Narver 1994; Deng and Dart 1994; Liu 1995). Similar to the interest with regard to the marketing concept, many authors espoused its (the marketing concept) value but did not develop a generally accepted method of measuring its efficacy and/or relation to business performance. Whilst the early interest considered the market orientation important, few studies attempted to develop a valid measurement method: "...since the concept (market orientation) represents the foundation of high quality marketing practice. What is noteworthy, however, is that relatively little systematic effort has been devoted to developing a valid measure of market orientation" (Kohli et al. 1993: p467).

Meehan's (1996), review of marketing orientation identified two major themes, an information based approach and a culture based approach. The former was determined

by the work of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli (1993), whilst the latter was determined by the work of Narver and Slater (1990) and Slater and Narver (1994). Further work by Deng and Dart (1994) and Cadogan and Diamantopoulos (1995) applied an integrated approach in an international context.

#### **4.3 The Market Orientation Studies of Kohli and Jaworski (1990)**

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) begin by summarising their review of the literature base of this subject by stating: "The literature reflects remarkably little effort to develop a framework for understanding the implementation of the marketing concept." Using the discussions and conclusions of McCarthy and Perreault (1984), they define the term market orientation to mean the implementation of the marketing concept.

Similar to previous findings in this thesis, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) are highly critical of the extant literature concerning the marketing concept. Concerning market orientation they state: "Given its widely acknowledged importance, one might expect the concept to have a clear meaning, a rich tradition of theory development, and a related body of empirical findings. On the contrary, a close examination of the literature reveals a lack of clear definition, little careful attention to measurement issues, and virtually no empirically based theory. Further, the literature pays little attention to the contextual factors that may make a market orientation either more or less appropriate for a particular business." From their (Kohli and Jaworski 1990) summary of the extant literature, an hypothesised model of market orientation was developed.

Three main elements for a market orientation construct were given as: (1) customer focus, (2) co-ordinated marketing and (3) profitability. According to Kohli and Jaworski (1990: p3): "...a market-oriented organisation is one in which the three pillars of the marketing concept (customer focus, co-ordinated marketing, profitability) are operationally manifest." This conclusion provided the starting point for their research to identify and create a market orientation construct via an extensive literature review and empirical findings based upon field interviews in four U.S. cities. The findings of the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) study provided a different emphasis of components than initially given for a market orientation construct. Each of these will be considered.

**(a) Customer Focus**

A major element was the importance of the customer as a central element of a market orientation. This included finding information about all the aspects of customers, not just their needs and wants. This wider view included exogenous market factors as well as current and future needs of customers.

**(b) Co-ordinated Marketing**

Market orientation was seen by respondents as important for a variety of departments to be cognisant of, and responsive to customer needs. The pluralistic nature and political decision making of organisations emphasises the effective implementation of this element within a market orientation construct.

Whilst discussing the differential emphasis between the terms "marketing orientation" and "market orientation", the latter was interpreted as preferable by respondents within the study. The major reason for this was the more likely adoption of the

orientation by other “non marketing” departments in the organisation due the implied meaning of the title. This concurs with the literature findings cited earlier in that marketing departments were perceived as being relatively ineffective and were generally losing status against other functional departments within commercial organisations. It also highlights the perceived importance of terms when applied to the commercial scenario. Academic authors often use the terms “market orientation” and “marketing orientation” interchangeably. It is in the applied situation where there is a significance in interpretation.

### **(c) Profitability**

A tangential view to the received literature, the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) study concluded that profitability was a consequence of market orientation and not a component of it. In a later study, Jaworski and Kohli (1993: p65) indicate support for a relationship between market orientation and a judgmental nature of performance which did not include market share. This study is also one of the few to note the complex nature of measuring business performance and stated: “In this regard it is important to note that business performance is a multidimensional construct and may be characterised in a number of ways, including effectiveness, efficiency, and adaptability. Furthermore, performance in one dimension may run counter to performance in other dimensions.”

The implication therefore, was for market orientation to be considered against different dimensions of performance. Although this acknowledgement of the variety of performance measurement casts doubt on studies devoted to establishing a relationship between market orientation and business performance, more simplistic

approaches or business relationships were not discussed, for example consumer based sales compared to business to business scenario. Indeed, eliminating variability within the dimension of business performance does not seem to have been considered as important in any of the market orientation studies. This fundamental aspect of the market orientation, i.e. its ability to indicate a superior business performance, has been shown to be an area requiring further work. Whilst this and other related studies have provided the base for a body of research, it would appear there are difficulties with the methods of measuring business performance. .

There are a number of accountancy measurement methods available which are available to determine the performance of a commercial organisation in a free market system. If a relationship is to be established however, between market orientation and business performance, the central aspect of customer orientation should lead to consider only those business performance elements which are correlated directly with customer activity. This would ensure that market orientation measurement is not masked by the variety of accountancy reporting and measurement methods.

The research findings of Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993) provide additional perspectives to that of the reviewed literature for the market orientation construct. The previous components are retained, namely customer focus and co-ordinated marketing, but extend the domain of these concepts. They also satisfy some of the criticisms of other writers in that marketing provided the means of what to do in organisations, but not how.

The first of the three constructs presented is that of intelligence generation. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) view this as the starting point for market orientation. They also provide a view that market intelligence is wider than customers verbalised needs and preferences, giving exogenous factors that influence needs and preferences of consumers. The second construct, intelligence dissemination recognises the political nature of decision making, and its often pluralistic setting by emphasising the need, in some instances, for market intelligence to be “sold” to other departments to encourage their adoption of the marketing concept. The third construct, responsiveness is recognised as the “enabler” of the previous two, because: “...unless it responds to market needs, very little is accomplished.” (Kohli and Jaworski 1990: p7). Responsiveness, in the view of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) involves many areas of the organisation. It is also under this heading that according to Kohli and Jaworski (1990) that the tools of marketing are perceived to be implemented i.e.

1. Selecting target markets.
2. Designing and offering products/services that cater to their current and anticipated needs.
3. Producing, distributing, and promoting the products in a way that elicits favourable end-customer response.

As a consequence, the definition of market orientation presented by Kohli and Jaworski (1990: p8) is given as: “Market orientation is the organisation wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organisation wide responsiveness to it.” This definition and study however was not the only work in this area. A similar study, which also produced a behavioural model to measure the market orientation construct was developed by Narver and Slater (1990).



#### **4.4 The Narver and Slater (1990) Model of Market Orientation**

This empirical study considered the observed difficulties of equating the implemented marketing concept with a valid measurement method. Their (Narver and Slater 1990: p20) introductory view was given as: "Marketing academicians and practitioners have been observing for more than three decades that business performance is affected by market orientation, yet to date there has been no valid measure of a market orientation and hence no systematic analysis of its effect on a business performance".

The Narver and Slater (1990) hypotheses was initially developed by reviewing the major conceptual literature, but also included studies relating to sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) and market orientation with a view: "to identify the principle common threads." (Narver and Slater 1990: p21). The Narver and Slater (1990: p21) model also adopted a behaviourist approach, thus with the intention of being driven by the concept of creating superior value for customers, a fundamental element of sustainable competitive advantage. As a result, they define market orientation as: "Market orientation is the organisation culture...that most effectively and efficiently creates the necessary behaviours for the creation of superior value for buyers and, thus, continuous superior performance." The Narver and Slater (1990) model consisted of three behavioural components: (1) customer orientation, (2) competitor orientation and (3) inter-functional co-ordination. Two additional criteria were also identified as: (1) long-term focus and (2) profitability.

The customer orientation element was based upon a two dimensional construct of perceived relative costs and benefits by the customer directly linked to the continuous creation of superior value. Competitor orientation involved the understanding of the

strengths and weaknesses of key current and potential competitors. Inter-functional co-ordination implies that all personnel within an organisation can have an effect upon the firm's output. The co-ordinated function of all resources combines to produce superior value "continuously". Any element in this area therefore, which does not either harmonise or work effectively, will reduce the capability of the organisation. As a result the entire business therefore has an effect on this element, not for example, one marketing department.

This is consistent with customer focus ideals reported in earlier related studies on the marketing concept and its implementation. Narver and Slater (1990) indicated that differences existed within companies concerning the third element, and offered suggestions of basic reward systems and strong leadership methods as solutions for re-orienting an organisation with the purpose of harmonising the workforce with a unitary direction for the benefit of the organisation. These suggestions however are somewhat simplistic, and it would be difficult to envisage how they could be applied in their stated form generically across commercial and public sector organisations. The presence of these does indicate firstly the need for such management attention, and secondly brings to light an element which has been previously ignored i.e. when considering how an organisation should implement the marketing concept with the intention of improving staff morale towards the goals of customer orientation and other related process.

Narver and Slater (1990) also found problems with the categorisation of profit as an element within the model, stating that the literature indicated profitability was a

component of market orientation. Fieldwork by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) however determined that profitability was a consequence of market orientation, not a part of it, a position with which Narver and Slater (1990) concurred. It was therefore separated from the other three behavioural components of market orientation.

Customer and competitor orientation were described as being based upon all of the activities involved in acquiring information about buyers and competitors in the target market and disseminating it throughout the business(es). Inter-functional co-ordination was stated as involving the businesses' combined efforts, typically involving more than the marketing department to create superior value for the customers. Further to these, Narver and Slater (1990) presented eight situational variables from the industrial organisation and marketing strategy literature that they considered could place considerable emphasis upon the business profitability, and hence possibly to a link with market orientation. These are discussed under the section "Factors Affecting Market Orientation".

The Narver and Slater (1990) is one of the two classic studies which brought about the lineage of the attempt to study and quantify the implementation and operationalisation of the marketing concept within organisations via the market orientation model. A number of weaknesses have been identified however, and this approach has not been replicated effectively well in other studies.

#### **4.5 Integration and Generalisation Studies of the Market Orientation Construct**

Since the raised awareness of the market orientation construct studies of Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993), Kohli et al. (1993), Jaworski and Kohli (1993), Narver and Slater (1990), Slater and Narver (1994), a number of studies have been conducted which attempt to integrate the various market orientation constructs (Deng and Dart 1994; Cadogan and Diamantopoulos 1995; Pitt et al. 1996). None of these are as extensive as the Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993), and Kohli et al. (1993) studies however. Deng and Dart (1994) present a more extensive question set initially, some questions then being screened out for pragmatic reasons. In some cases due to question reversal, which was reported to have had a negative reaction from respondents in early pre-tests.

The components being measured by this model mirrored those of Narver and Slater (1990), i.e. customer focus, competitor focus, inter-functional co-ordination and profitability. The questions relating to the last of these were sub-divided into the two elements of accounts system responsiveness and sales markets potential. This final element however was determined by just one question, "We have a good idea of the sales potential for each of our markets" (respondents were required to rate their response on a five point scale). This subjective view of the respondent does not appear to have been validated by any other measure in the study. The other questions under this section of profitability refer to the accountancy system responsiveness as follows:

- Q29. Our accounting system could fairly quickly determine the profitability of each of our product lines.
- Q30. Our accounting system could fairly quickly determine the profitability of our sales territories.

- Q31. Our accounting system could fairly quickly determine the profitability of each of our customers.
- Q32. Our accounting system could fairly quickly determine the profitability of each of our distribution methods.

The perceptual term of “fairly quickly”, does not provide a satisfactory measurement since there is no relative benchmark with regard to time, or to the needs of the responding organisation. The profitability element of the market orientation construct of most studies (except that of Narver and Slater 1990) generally considers that the higher the market orientation of an organisation, the higher the correlation of profitability. These questions do not appear to measure this construct, rather they would appear they refer to the responsiveness of the organisation’s accountancy system, similar to one of the major constructs of the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) Market Orientation Model. Therefore these questions could be more appropriately considered as aspects of information responsiveness (Kohli and Jaworski 1990). The remaining design of the measurement tool is similar to the Narver and Slater (1990) model. The Cadogan and Diamantopoulos (1995) construct attempted to genuinely integrate the models of Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993) and Narver and Slater (1990).

Whilst comparing the constructs and operationalisations of each model, the only two conceptual constructs which did not overlap significantly were those of responsiveness in the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model with customer and competitor orientation of the Narver and Slater (1990) model. Cadogan and Diamantopoulos (1995) went on to comment however that there was significant overlap of these concepts in the operationalisation of the two constructs via the measurement tools that were used, therefore identifying a weakness in the Narver and Slater (1990)

measurement tool. Mostly, both models were viewed as measuring similar constructs via a behavioural approach and at an operationalisation level the overlap between the two models is high (Cadogan and Diamantopoulos 1995). In comparison of the two however, it is the Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993) model which has received the greater attention in the literature and has been used as a basis for a significant number of further studies concerning market orientation. It has also been subjected to a more rigorous process of scale development and testing (please see Scale Development of the Marketing Orientation Construct)

#### **4.6 The Relation of Market Orientation to Business Performance.**

A key element of the market orientation, and some would argue almost its most important purpose, is the ability to at least correlate against some measure of business performance (Felton 1959; McNamara 1972). This traditional viewpoint implies, that if this is not possible, market orientation almost has no purpose other than being management information which is “nice to know”. This type of information can be considered to have no material functionality within the marketing strategy and objective setting process of an organisation (McDaniel and Gates 1996).

Business performance is not however a uni-dimensional construct since a considerable number of items determine its measurement. A variety of studies have considered this aspect of market orientation. These include profitability (Narver and Slater 1990; Ruekert 1992; Slater and Narver 1994), customer service and retention (Narver et al. 1993), sales growth (Slater and Narver 1994), new product success (Slater and Narver 1994), growth in sales revenue, employee satisfaction, commitment and trust (Ruekert 1992), overall business performance and employees

organisational commitment (Jaworski and Kohli 1993), innovation-marketing fit, product advantage and inter-functional teamwork, project impact performance and new product success (Atuahene-Gima 1995, 1996). Narver and Slater (1990: p22) also identified that business performance for non profit organisations was analogous to: "...survival, which means earning revenues sufficient to cover long term expenses and/or otherwise satisfying all key constituencies in the long run". This was a definition derived from Kotler and Andreason (1987). There have not however been any studies which have attempted to evaluate the role of market orientation in the public sector.

Concerning the measurement of market orientation and business performance in a commercial context, in their key study, Narver and Slater (1990) used the top managers assessment of the SBU's return on assets (ROA) in relation to that of all other competitors in the area. Respondents were directed to consider return on investment, return on assets and return on net assets as equivalent. The key studies of Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993) and Kohli et al. (1993) used two measures, one subjective according to managers perception on a five point scale, the other an objective measure of the dollar share of the served market. A difficulty arises however in the Narver and Slater (1990) methodology for measuring return on assets (ROA). Net assets is a derived term. Accounting practices vary from company to company and, in the case of the USA also from state to state. The net effect is a variety of methods available when determining equivalent performance results from company to company, each giving a different results under generic headings. It may be noted that in most cases, accountancy practices and procedures normally remain the same within a company over a period of years, and changes are reported within end of year annual

reports where commercial organisations are required so to do. Therefore, although accountancy policies may vary, shareholders and potential buyers of shares usually accept this variation in practice. Net profit quoted is accepted as a benchmark, and rarely are the methods of its calculation disputed. The statutory financial reporting methods are also at best six monthly. Respondents perception of competitor assessment in relation to the key studies is therefore subject to unknown variation.

The market orientation models of Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993), Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli et al. (1993) make no mention of allowances being made for fiscal changes in either accounting methods or taxation variation imposed by Government. In view of the previous discussion, it is therefore understandable that it was not possible to develop a valid measure of profit (and long range focus) "...as part of a one dimension of market orientation" in the Narver and Slater (1990: p20) study. The Kohli and Jaworski (1990) study was unable to determine a relationship between market orientation and market share. This aspect is however more difficult to dismiss as a result of measurement differences.

In the first instance, in view of other correlations that have been identified, with regard to this aspect of dimensional constructs, market orientation would be expected to relate to that of market share, this (market share) being a direct measurement of customer response. No reason has been identified for this apparent failure of the market orientation models to correlate with market share measures. The measurement methods of market orientation in the Jaworski and Kohli (1993) model attempt to establish measurement dimensions with regard to market share but with no other



influencing factors. It is apparent that other forces may cause variation with regard to the profit/return on investment and market share construct. Market orientation of a firm may therefore be only one factor which effects change on market share. As a result, market share/market orientation relationship may not be the only elements of a function algorithm which determine the relationship, and an attempt to correlate the two in isolation was therefore not, understandably, successful.

The effects of the variety of accountancy measurement methods has further possible consequences. They could invalidate or mask the measurement of small variations in market orientation and performance. Next, if the relationship of market orientation and performance measured against net asset is tenuous or weak, then spurious conclusions may be drawn. Worse, where a negative relation is noted, the lower performance in relation to other companies in the industry for that year may be due to a change in accountancy practice or substantive items being "written off in the books".

Both models of Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993) consider that the market orientation construct is not a binary measurement, i.e. a company is not measured as being either market oriented or not. Rather, market orientation can be measured on a continuum and this in turn can theoretically be equated to business performance. Narver and Slater (1990) suggest a U shape relationship of market orientation and profitability, with high profit return rates at each end of the continuum for companies with either very low or very high market orientations. No empirical evidence is given to support this although the costs market

orientation being uneconomic in some environments has been suggested by Miles and Snow (1978).

At the lower end of market orientation, although profits may be relatively high, either the costs of achieving market orientation outweigh the benefits gained, or factors related to internal orientation are an important element of the competitive strategy e.g. a strong price competition marketing strategy emphasis on similar quality goods (Narver and Slater 1990). Narver and Slater (1990) also suggest further that differing types of industries will present different market orientation/business performance relationships. This is shown as an example by Narver and Slater (1990) in the form of a market orientation leverage weakness, within the dimension lumber and plywood companies. Narver and Slater (1990) state that superior value for customers was traditionally offered by competitive pricing strategies for given qualities of product, and that the consumers were actively mobile between suppliers, dependant upon price of the commodity. Narver and Slater (1990: p31) state: "Today, to some degree, virtually all forest products companies understand that they can create superior value for buyers of commodities on a basis other than price. Nevertheless, they differ greatly in their success in implementing non-price-based buyer-value strategies." This scenario is business to business based, and Narver and Slater (1990) do not indicate whether or not a difference exists in terms of application with regard to market orientation for consumer based companies or business to business based companies. They (Narver and Slater 1990) do suggest differing business groups would exhibit different relationships, but expectedly, do not suggest any hypotheses outside that of their empirical research base covered in their 1990 study.

Narver and Slater (1990) initially assumed equal weighting for each of the market orientation components, computing a score by a simple average of the three components, customer orientation, competitor orientation and inter-functional coordination. Because this was a new type of study, no other empirical base provided any indication for a variation to these ratios. This assumption of equal weighting is questioned later in the study (Narver and Slater 1990) as an item for further investigation suggesting that industries may have different ratios or balance of the three market orientation components, implying some ratios may produce better market orientation and business profitability leverage. They (Narver and Slater 1990) did however expect the relation of market orientation and business profitability to be generally positive, although not the same for all types of industry. It is also stated that this general positive trend is expected "all things being equal" (Narver and Slater 1990: p34). This *ceteris paribus* condition implies that differing outside conditions may have an effect that will prevent this positive relationship existing.

It is difficult to envisage how these conditions could be created to control elements of an environment other than via an experimental methodology which is almost impossible to implement in a dynamic and changing workplace. This relationship however is similar to the moderating elements described within the Kohli et al. (1993) study, although Narver and Slater (1990) are not explicit concerning this matter.

Both sets of authors (Kohli and Jaworski 1990, 1993; Narver and Slater 1990) emphasise a strong relation between market orientation and profitability, and Narver and Slater (1990) specifically state this in terms of market orientation being an

important determinant of business performance. Other empirical studies have indicated that positive linkages exist between measures of market orientation and performance (Ruekert 1992; Deshpande et al. 1993; Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Narver et al. 1993; Deng and Dart 1994; Slater and Narver 1994; Pitt et al. 1996).

These studies have not as yet however, been effectively replicated, or as a whole do not provide a specific measure of consistently stated performance. In all of these studies, performance is measured across a variety of items including return on assets, capital on assets employed and sales growth. There appears to be no consensus as to what would be an appropriate performance measurement, and this is compounded by empirical studies using performance measurement instruments in terms of both self reported perceptions and measures in relation to other companies "within the industry".

Self reported measures have been reported to be problematic and in many instances inaccurate (Mathews and Diamantopoulos 1995). There is not therefore a consensus with regard to a definition of performance for the purposes of market orientation measurement. Two types of performance for the purposes of measurement exist, firstly direct parameters which are provided as a result of straight forward transactions and include output measures such as; market share, growth rate, size of business in relation to its most important competitors, and secondly indirect measures such as profitability, and return on capital employed. The issue of performance also raises such considerations about long vs short term, and financial vs relationship building factors (Deshpande et al. 1993). Tactical issues within the control of a company could

vary depending upon the strategic outcome required, e.g. long term profit requiring short term cash investment. These issues could influence significantly market orientation factors and their relationship to performance.

#### **4.7 Factors Affecting the Market Orientation and Business Performance Link**

The Kohli and Jaworski (1990) study initially provided three antecedents, or organisational factors which "...impede or enhance the implementation of the business philosophy represented by the marketing concept." (Kohli and Jaworski 1990: p6). Three hierarchically ordered categories of antecedents were identified as: (1) top management, (2) organisational systems and (3) interdepartmental factors. As a consequence within the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) study, market orientation was hypothesised as being related to employee commitment morale, and to business performance. These concepts are not new. Other studies within the marketing arena have also found that barriers to implementation occur if positive approaches are not present, particularly concerning top management (McDonald 1996).

The individual, inter-group, and organisation wide factors were labelled as senior management factors, interdepartmental dynamics and organisational systems respectively. It is through these major factors that Kohli and Jaworski (1990) argue that a market orientation can be significantly influenced. These factors were further refined in the Kohli and Jaworski (1993: p476) study, which defined categories under each of the three headings. Since these factors are under the control of senior managers, "...a deliberate engendering of a market orientation is possible." From the Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993) studies, each of the elements of the antecedents is

given, with their respective relationship to the market orientation construct. A positive relationship indicates support for the market orientation construct, whilst a negative relationship indicates a hindrance of it.

**1. Top Management**

Top management attitude (positive relation).  
Risk aversion of top management (negative relation).

**2. Interdepartmental Dynamics**

Interdepartmental conflict (negative relation).  
Interdepartmental connectedness (positive relation).

**3. Organisational Systems**

Formalisation of the organisation (negative relation).  
Centralisation of the organisation (negative relation).  
Departmentalisation of the organisation (negative relation).  
Market based factors for evaluating and rewarding managers (positive relation).

It is appropriate therefore to suggest that certain conditions can assist an organisation to become “market oriented”, and the list identified by the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) studies provide the main areas to consider for an organisation. Market orientation studies also de-emphasise the role of the marketing managers and departments, (Gray et al. 1998) which is particularly important in view of the perceived lowering of their status, discussed earlier in this thesis. The Kohli et al. (1993) study also identify a number of consequences of a market orientation. Firstly the frequently stated (by academic scholars) aspects of the positive relation between market orientation and business performance. The approach, at this stage does not allow for the concepts of new product innovations, market turbulence or the nature of the customer company relationship e.g. the difference between capital purchase items which is often made only occasionally, and the frequent purchase of victuals. Kohli and Jaworski (1993) acknowledged this need and considered a number of other consequences that impinge upon market orientation and business performance. The first of these, after the market orientation/business performance relation, was the focus on employees of the organisation.

A market orientation afforded employees with social and psychological benefits, and as a consequence, results in commitment to the organisation. This has resource implications in terms of work output and quality. The next consequence of market orientation considered was the effect of the environmental conditions. Three are stated in the Kohli and Jaworski (1993) study as market turbulence, competitive intensity and technological turbulence. The first is characterised by the rate of change in the composition of customers and their preferences. The second is characterised by customers remaining, or not with organisations because they have to due to the level of competition. The third item is characterised by the rate of technological change. These three factors are stated as moderators that can affect the relationship of market orientation and business performance in a positive or negative manner. These three elements of market turbulence, competitive intensity and technological turbulence are suggested as being robust of such external influences in the Jaworski and Kohli (1993) study.

This particular issue is difficult to isolate in that some of the business performance measurements in the Kohli and Jaworski studies (1990, 1993) are both subjective and relative to other companies in the industry, according to the respondents view. Firstly there is the problem of managers self bias, which may not provide an accurate perception of the reality of the situation (Mathews and Diamantopoulos 1995). Therefore, respondents may not have been able to take account of such moderation and the range of other factors. Also, as business performance was relative to other companies within an industry sector and if the moderation influences have had the same influence on all organisations within the sub groups of the study, market orientation would theoretically have been observed not to be influenced by these

external influences, in relation to the other companies in the industry sector. Their effect could have been perceived by the respondents therefore to have been eliminated or non existent, hence the result in the Jaworski and Kohli (1993) study.

The Narver and Slater (1990) study initially identified eight moderators which impinged upon the market orientation business performance link. These were stated as being situational variables and needed to be controlled "...in analysing the effect of a market orientation on a business's profitability." (Narver and Slater 1990: p28). This implied a measurable and determinable effect of these external influences upon the market orientation/business performance link. The indirect approach of Narver and Slater (1990) to identify the moderating effect of external influences used an ordinary least squares regression method of analysis. The eight situational variables considered as independent variables were given as:

- 1) Buyer power: the extent to which the customers of an SBU are able to negotiate lower prices from it.
- 2) Supplier power: the extent to which an SBU is able to negotiate lower prices from its suppliers.
- 3) Seller concentration: In an SBU's principal served market segment, the percentage of total sales accounted for by the four competitors with the largest sales (including the SBU if appropriate).
- 4) Ease of entry of new competitors (new sellers): The likelihood of a new competitor being able to earn satisfactory profits in an SBU's principal served market segment within three years after entry.
- 5) Rate of market growth: over the last three years, the average annual growth rate of total sales in an SBU's principal served market segment.
- 6) Rate of technological change: the extent to which production/service technology in an SBU's principal served market segment has changed over the past three years.
- 7) Relative size: the size of an SBU's sales revenues in its principal served market segment in relation to those of its largest competitor.
- 8) Relative costs: an SBU's average total operating costs (administrative, production, marketing/sales, etc.) in relation to those of its largest competitor in its principal served market segment.



Although accepted within the Narver and Slater (1990) study as influencing factors upon the business performance of a company, these eight situational variables were required to be integrated to the measurement tool of market orientation in order to give some indication of the correlated value to the market orientation/business performance link. Some of these however, could not be considered as independent variables. A widely accepted definition of an independent variable by Hawkins and Tull (1993: p162) is given as: "The variable that is manipulated by the researcher in an experiment." It is difficult to see how, from the definitions given in the Narver and Slater (1990) that variables 4 through 7 could be considered as independent, upon which a researcher might have control.

This brings some doubt as to the method of identifying external factors within the Narver and Slater (1990) model which required some form of assessment, to be able at least to determine a correlation between market orientation and business performance. As a result of the forgoing, it is therefore hypothesised that:

- H<sub>1</sub>** "MARKOR" is an appropriate model for measuring the construct of Market Orientation, for the Public Sector Sport and Recreation providers, and
- H<sub>2</sub>** Public Sector Sport and Recreation providers that indicate Market Orientation as measured by the "MARKOR" model perform better as indicated by direct measurements of income and attendance.

#### **4.8 Summary**

One of the primary motivations behind the studies of market orientation is its link to business performance. What emerges therefore from the literature is the need to establish a direct measure of performance as a variable which can be measured

against the tools used for market orientation for those companies wishing to pursue an objective of market orientation. Other factors however need to be taken into account which may influence the measurement or indeed the operation of market orientation. These may include internal and external factors, inside or outside the control of an organisation. Narver and Slater (1990) also identify early on the linkage to non-profit organisations by suggesting a similar relation to this concept. No studies yet however have been conducted in the public sector arena which consider the role and function of market orientation. There are some aspects which also surround the concept of the market orientation, identified, but not confirmed in other studies to date about the antecedents and consequences of this topic. The influence of top management, interdepartmental dynamics and organisational systems clearly have some bearing upon market orientation and its operationalisation.

The extent of the testing of the Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993) Kohli et al. (1993) MARKOR scale and its subsequent use in other studies suggests that this is an appropriate research instrument to use within this study. At this stage services marketing has not been considered, and it is appropriate that this aspect is now considered to determine what if any amendments to the research instrument are required to incorporate this topic.

## **Chapter 5 THE MEASUREMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter evaluated the various forms of the market orientation construct. This study however is based upon a service industry, the public sector sport and recreation providers. This chapter therefore evaluates the background of services quality, its definitions and purported measurements, and then considers the dimensional aspects of this construct. The SERVQUAL model is evaluated against the theoretical and operational criticisms followed by a consideration of a performance based approach using the SERVPERF model.

### **5.2 Background**

Conventional wisdom suggests there is a difference between the marketing of goods and services (Sasser et al. 1978; Parasuraman et al. 1985; Glynn and Barnes 1995). Further to this, some researchers have suggested that competitive advantage may be gained by exploiting aspects of service quality. This can be as a topic in isolation, as a part of strategy, or when services form part of the elements of an augmented product (Quinn et al. 1990; Martin and Horne 1992; Wright 1995). It is also suggested the gains that can be obtained by improving the level of services can apply to both the manufacturing and service industries (Berry et al. 1988).

Service Quality has been linked with a number of marketing and business processes which include an apparent relationship to costs (Crosby 1979), profitability (Buzzell and Gale 1987; Rust and Zahorik 1993; Zahorik and Rust 1992), customer satisfaction (Bolton and Drew 1991; Boulding et al. 1993), and customer retention, (Reichheld

and Sasser 1990). Service Quality is widely regarded as a driver of corporate marketing and financial performance (Caruana et al. 1999). Within a marketing context, the characteristics of services (intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability, and the inseparability of production and consumption) which differentiate services from products have been relatively well established in the literature (Shostack 1977; Parasuraman et al. 1985). What has not been so well established by academic researchers is the role in the marketing process that these characteristics take and the methodology of measurement. Product quality can be determined by a number of physical measured parameters. Services on the other hand do not necessarily lend themselves as easily to these forms of measurement criteria and methods, particularly where no tangible evidence remains after the service has been provided. Consequently, studies have attempted to establish some form of measurable parameters that can be used to establish a link with marketing and related issues. Early contemporary work by Parasuraman et al. (1985: p42) infer that three basic considerations emerge from the literature:

1. Service quality is more difficult for the consumer to evaluate than goods quality.
2. Service quality perceptions result from a comparison of consumer expectations with actual service performance.
3. Quality evaluations are not made solely on the outcome of a service; they also involve evaluations of the process of delivery.

Item 1 is probably a major influence with regard to the interest that the subject of services marketing holds. This issue being measured by the significant number of journal articles and books produced on the subject. For example Berry and Parasuraman (1993) cite SERVMARK, an early database developed in 1988 which contained a computerised index of the services marketing literature developed by Fisk, Tansuhaj and Crosby (1988), and contained over 3900 references. Items 2 and 3

are less well established, and have resulted in a number of themes or different approaches to this area of research.

### **5.3 Service Quality Definitions**

The literature on service quality and its application to marketing is vast. As a result, service quality has been defined in a variety of ways by marketing practitioners and academic scholars. Examples of alternative definitions include value (Abbott 1955; Feigenbaum 1991), conformance to expectations (Levitt 1972), and conformance to requirements (Crosby 1979). Customer experience has also been an important issue within this subject. For example Garvin (1987: p104) views service quality as “synonymous with innate excellence, a mark of uncompromising standards and high achievement”. He argues that “...people learn to recognise quality only through the experience gained from repeated exposure”. Others have focused upon the customer expectations, considering the link between this aspect and delivery.

The role of the customer has also not been clear. In some instances deemed as a static entity, where service quality is defined as “conformance to expectations” implying that “customer expectation” is an attribute, which can be determined and matched in terms of delivery. Parasuraman et al. (1988: p15) have suggested that service quality is “similar in many ways to an attitude” whereas others have criticised this vagueness (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994), although studies have yet to be developed which explore this topic fully. Others do not view consumers in such rational, predictable terms (Buzzell and Gale 1987). Thus, if services are considered to be variable, as are people, then considerable difficulty is introduced, since it is the equivalent of finding

a methodology which can determine some useful form of measurement within a scenario of two moving goalposts i.e. the service quality construct and the customer.

Notwithstanding, assuming that some form of useful measurement of service quality could be determined from within a marketing perspective however, to be of pragmatic value the components of service quality need to be determined. Then, if possible, their relation to marketing and related strategic business processes, particularly elements which can be understood and manipulated by management (Garvin 1987).

This operationalisation of the service quality construct has proved illusive over the years and has resulted in a variety of approaches. This difficulty of the operationalisation of the service quality construct has largely been stated as due to the nature of services themselves i.e. intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability, and the inseparability of production and consumption (Shostack 1977; Parasuraman et al. 1985). The inability to measure the customers' viewpoint directly in relation to service quality, and the lack of empirical evidence which links this topic to attitude, have resulted in approaches which use the term 'perceived service quality' on the part of the consumer.

These have given rise to a comparison between consumer expectations and consumer evaluation of actual service delivery (Lehtinen and Lehtinen 1982; Grönroos 1984; Parasuraman et al. 1988). An early expectations model "Concept of Perceived Service Quality" was presented by Grönroos (1983), refined later to show "how the quality experiences are connected to the traditional activities resulting in a perceived

service quality” (Grönroos 1990). According to this, good perceived quality is obtained when the experienced quality meets the expected quality of the service by a customer. What a customer perceives as quality can depend upon a number of factors such as market communication, word of mouth, corporate/local image and customer needs. Other measurement methods of service quality are based upon the dimensions of expectations and performance perceptions (Babakus and Inhofe 1991). Researchers in this field have therefore established a number of methodologies upon which to consider service quality, particularly with respect to the involvement of the customer. These are initially considered under the headings of input or process quality and output or output quality (Grönroos 1982).

**(a) Process Quality**

This is viewed as the customers’ qualitative evaluation of their participation in the service production process. It is therefore based upon how the customer sees the production process and how well they see themselves fitting into that process (Lehtinen and Lehtinen 1991). Similar definitions of perceived service quality incorporate the importance of clients/customers perceptions of quality (Lewis 1991; Takeuchi and Quelch 1983). Other studies have also concluded with this view that clients/customer perceptions of quality are consumer attitudes or judgements arising from comparisons by consumers of expectations of service with their perceptions of actual service performance (Grönroos 1982; Lewis and Booms 1983; Berry et al. 1988). Studies so far however consider the participation by the client/customer as an integral part of the service process. This involvement could be either very significant (heavy), or incidental (light) depending upon the nature of the service in question. This provides further aspects of the client/customer service interaction:

1. There is a difference in the nature of a client/customer due to style because of the level and degree of participation.
2. Other relevant and non-relevant experiences may have an effect upon the client/customers' attitude, irrespective of the participation process.
3. The studies so far considered do not apply to services which are intended to benefit those who are perhaps not its direct recipients (e.g. drink drive campaign by the Police).

## **(b) Output Quality**

The consumers' evaluation concerning the result of the service production process may be complex, involving others, particularly where tangible evidence is available after the production process e.g. visit to the hairdressers. Evaluation can therefore be very subjective, influenced by others, and where no tangible evidence exists after the service production process, output quality can only be measured by the participating client/customer, and in conjunction with other undefined variables such as group norms. This therefore makes benchmarking measurement of output quality very tenuous, and in the case of client/customer non-participatory service production, almost impossible. In addition to this, there have been problems determining whether service quality is an "attitude" on the part of the consumer or some other form of psychological state. Early work by Parasuraman (1988: p15) suggested that service quality was "...similar to attitude". This ambiguity which, although has given rise to criticism (discussed further later in this thesis) to date, has still not been empirically determined. These difficulties have resulted in a lack of an established baseline benchmark for measurement of input (process) and output quality. Consequently, there have been a significant number of studies to identify useful dimensions of measurement that can be applied to the service quality measurement issue.



## 5.4 Service Quality Dimensions

Grönroos, (1983), early work of Berry et al. (1988) and Parasuraman et al. (1988) proposed that perceived quality is a customer judgement, or a “form” of attitude. This results from comparisons by consumers in terms of their expectations of services compared against their perceptions of actual service performance of a providing organisation. This study of the relationship between expectations and perceptions has been used often by academic researchers in an attempt to understand customers’ service assessment and its role in the marketing process. Studies that have considered services in terms of expectations include: realistic evaluation (Spreng and Maeko 1996); subjective belief (Olson and Dover 1979); highest standard ideal (Tse and Wilton 1988); desire (Swan and Trawick 1980), and minimum emotional state (Zeithaml et al. 1993). A number of models have been proposed which determine service quality in the form of dimensions, which can be summarised as follows:

1. Two dimensional models. The dimensions of experienced quality presented in this model are Technical and Functional Quality (Grönroos 1982), which are also proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985), and Lehtinen (1986), and Cowell, D (1984). Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991) proposed the dimensions of process quality (the customer’s judgement during the service production process) and output quality (the customer’s judgement of the result of a service production process).
2. Three dimensional models. Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991) also proposed a three dimensional model consisting of physical quality, (the physical elements of service, including physical product and physical support) interactive quality (the interaction between the customer and interactive elements) and corporate quality (the dimension of quality developing during the history of service organisation). The model of Grönroos, (1982, 1984) consisted of functional quality (the service process, how the service was provided), technical quality (the outcome of the service encounter, what is received by the customer) and corporate image (the result of how consumers perceive the firm).
3. Other multi-dimensional models are proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985), initially by a 10 dimension model (1985), and subsequently by a refined 5 dimension model (1988). More recently however, Johnston (1995) proposed an 18 dimension model. These are listed in the following table, each dimension is provided with a brief description.

Access	Physical approachability of service location.
Aesthetics	The service package is agreeable or pleasing to the customer.
Attentiveness /helpfulness	The service and contact staff, provides help to the customer or gives the impression of interest in the customer and show a willingness to serve.
Availability	The availability of service facilities, staff and goods to the customer.
Care	The concern, consideration, sympathy and patience to the customer.
Cleanliness/tidiness	The cleanliness, and the neat and tidy appearance of the tangible components of the service package
Comfort	The physical comfort of the service environment and facilities.
Commitment	The staff's apparent commitment to their work.
Communication	The service providers communicate with the customer properly.
Competence	The skill, expertise and professionalism of the service executed.
Courtesy	The politeness, respect and propriety shown by the service (staff).
Flexibility	To amend or alter the service to meet the needs of the customer.
Friendliness	The warmth and personal approachability of the service providers.
Functionality	The serviceability and fitness for purpose or 'product quality' of service facilities and goods.
Integrity	The honesty, justice, fairness and trust of the service organisation.
Reliability	The reliability and consistency of the service, including punctuality.
Responsiveness	The speed and timeliness of service delivery.
Security	The personal safety of the customer during the service process.

**Table 1 Eighteen Determinants Of Service Quality (Johnston 1998)**

From the foregoing, the number of dimensions identified from a research perspective is growing in number and it is difficult to envisage any form of commonality developing, which could act as a base from which to develop a measure of service quality that has generic applicability. One measure however has gained significant attention in the literature which has attempted to achieve this and is known as SERVQUAL.

## **5.5 The SERVQUAL Measure**

Although there are a variety of methodologies available to purportedly measure service quality, SERVQUAL has received considerable attention in the literature, not least by the authors themselves (Parasuraman et al. 1985, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994; Zeithaml et al. 1990, 1992, 1993, 1996). It has acted however as a base for many other studies and it is therefore appropriate at this time to review this measure in some detail.

The measurement of service quality was based upon work undertaken in 1984 and published in 1985 which identified a “gap” which consisted of the perceived difference between customer expectation and the service which was actually received (Parasuraman et al. 1985). Subsequent to this, and built upon previous research the service quality assessment tool SERVQUAL was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988). This was founded on the view that the customers’ view is paramount. This assessment is conceptualised as an expected service-perceived service gap. Initially, ten dimensions served as the structure of the service quality domain for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. These were namely reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/knowing the customer, and tangibles. These were then reduced to 5 dimensions (which encapsulated the previous ten dimensions) and according to Parasuraman et al. (1988: p30): “...it provided a basic skeleton through the expectations/perceptions format, encompassing statements for each of the five service quality dimensions. The skeleton could be adapted depending upon the requirements of specific research needs for a particular organisation implying a generic application”.

## **5.6 Theoretical Criticisms of the SERVQUAL Measure**

Other authors were not fully supportive of SERVQUAL . Cronin and Taylor (1992 1994) for example, as a result of developing a performance based measurement of service quality (SERVPERF) noted: “Our results are incompatible with both the one-dimensional view of expectations and the gap formation for service quality. Instead, we find that service quality is directly influenced only by perceptions [of performance]”. This view was supported by Babakus and Boller, (1992) and Babakus

and Mangold, (1992). Other criticisms were also offered by authors with respect to replication studies that have been conducted since the original measure was first published (Wright 1995). Indeed Parasuraman (1995) comments: "Replication studies have not been able to reproduce as "clean" a five-dimensional factor structure as was obtained in the original study that produced the instrument (PZB 1988)". Buttle (1996) provides a useful structure with regard to the criticisms of the SERVQUAL measure under theoretical and operational headings. These are considered under: (1) Paradigmatic Objections, (2) Gaps Model Measurement, (3) Process Orientation, and (4) Dimensionality.

#### **5.6.1 Paradigmatic Objections**

Buttle (1996) suggests that SERVQUAL has been inappropriately based upon an expectations-disconfirmation rather than an attitudinal measure of service quality. A short discussion ensues regarding the operationalisation of customer satisfaction in terms of expectations and outcomes, but no evidence suggesting the benefits of this approach, nor indeed any indication that customer satisfaction can be linked to important criteria such as business performance. No empirical evidence is offered to underpin this view, other than a further criticism that the SERVQUAL measure is not built upon "...extant knowledge in economics, statistics and psychology". The lack of supporting references makes this argument somewhat weak however, although Buttle's (1996) discussion uses Cronin and Taylor's (1992, 1994) outline of the difficulties which have arisen over differences between consumer satisfaction and service quality literature. Iacobucci et al.'s (1994) view is similar, concluding that these issues: "...have not been consistently defined and differentiated from each other in the literature". These arguments therefore suggest that the expectations-

disconfirmations as an appropriate base fails to substantively materialise if contemporary research is used.

The second argument under this heading identifies that the SERVQUAL measure has not been based upon appropriate extant knowledge from the fields of economics, statistics and psychology (Anderson 1992). Although Buttle (1996) offers very little support for the criticism of the lack of the psychological research field base, he (Buttle 1996) suggests that costs are not taken into account concerning improving quality. This indirectly links to the argument of what the consumer perceives as what a provider “should” offer, compared to what some authors state as “would” offer in service quality literature (Teas 1993). There appears to be some ground in this criticism, in that what a consumer perceives as “ideally should be offered” could in many instances be too expensive for the company to provide, and does not necessarily link to a reality view in the consumers mind. This weakens considerably the purpose for which the SERVQUAL measure was based, and links substantively to the difficulties of the consumers’ view of quality identified by expectation which could be variable and as a result be difficult to measure effectively.

The third argument suggests difficulties with regard to the scaling method adopted. Buttle (1996) criticises SERVQUAL for collecting data using Likert style scales, suggesting that they are non-metric ordinal scales, inappropriate for second order analysis such as factor analysis (Labovitz 1970). Much of the work of attitude measurement depends upon scales such as these (Malhotra 1996; Churchill 1999) and

it has not been possible to prove conclusively that using scales measuring attitude related issues are either ordinal (non-metric) or interval (metric).

Studies which measure attitude for example via Likert type and semantic differential scales assume that they are interval scales, to do otherwise would invalidate the scale itself. Indeed some of the discussions which determine whether the scale should be 5 point or 7 point are subjective and not based upon empirical research with regard to scale measurement itself. Respondent bias could be due to either extremism, or conservatism; the former causing respondents to use the ends of the scale to a greater extent than should be, or the latter in which the respondent shies away from the extremes and replies only to a mid range of answers.

Respondents' replying with "what the interviewer wants to hear" can also result in a positive bias (McDaniel and Gates 1996). All of these could imply that the distance between each point of an attitude related scale is not equal across the full range, thereby making it ordinal or non-metric. Based upon the extent and the method of use of the scales in the literature however, this is not the conventional wisdom view. Nunnally (1978) argues strongly in favour of testing the scales via reliability and validity techniques, which would determine their suitability and appropriateness. There are not however any studies which categorically query the validity of the Likert type scales and state, based upon an empirical study that the scale is fatally flawed. In fact, to accept this premise would bring into question a great many of the empirically based studies in this area, which have treated this as an interval based scale. Buttle's (1996) criticism in this area is therefore not well founded or confirmed.

Further criticisms however are offered by Buttle (1996) in that the balance and symmetry of the SERVQUAL instrument are questioned. The argument is offered that extremes of expectation are more significantly affected when failure occurs (Hardie et al. 1992 cited by Buttle, 1996). A subjective view is offered that customers will be critical of poor service but remain silent when exceptional service occurs. This may be a result of the method of recording of such items. Service quality systems that request customer feedback on a self reported basis do certainly appear to receive a higher level of complaint than commendations. This however does not seem to be the case if respondents are asked directly and the information is recorded on their behalf. It would appear that Buttle (1996) is making the same complaint about the nature of the scales being used for measurement, in that depending upon the circumstance i.e. generally poor service or catastrophic failure, the range of response of the customer will not be proportionate to the level of service. Again, very little evidence is offered for this view, and usually an appropriate research methodology would underpin the validity and reliability issues of a study, establishing a true and appropriate measurement.

#### **5.6.2 Gaps Model Measurement**

Buttle (1996) provides a set of related criticisms which consider that the gaps model does not offer a meaningful or measurable dimension due to two main difficulties. Firstly, difference scores are “notoriously unreliable” (Iacobucci et al. 1994), and secondly that expectations may or may not be fully formed in the mind of the consumer (Iacobucci et al. 1994). Although this may or may not be true, there is not the presence of either norm based measurements to identify the nature or extent of this second weakness, nor when expectations might be developed (Babakus and Inhofe 1991). Babakus and Inhofe (1991) also raise the issue of changed expectation due to

third party validation, or “social desirability response bias”. This aspect of human behaviour is very difficult to measure either from a relative or absolute standpoint, since the formation of this expectancy can only occur as a result of interaction with others. These arguments are somewhat persuasive and weaken the strength of the SERVQUAL measure considerably.

Of very significant importance however is the recent work which involves performance based measures (Cronin and Taylor 1994) which appears to explain more of the variance than the expectancy based measure of SERVQUAL. It is assumed however that the arguments of scale development that were offered with regard to SERVQUAL apply also to the performance based measure of SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor 1994) and although this approach may offer a more meaningful scale, it is not without its critics.

### **5.6.3 Process Orientation**

Some authors have considered service quality under the parameters of input and output elements, or process and outcome quality (Lehtinen and Lehtinen 1991; Lewis, 1991; Takeuchi and Quelch 1983). With regard to SERVQUAL, it has been argued by some that the outcome quality is not present, and as such is weakened compared to other measures which incorporate directly, outcome quality (Cronin and Taylor 1992; Mangold and Babakus 1991; Richard and Allaway 1993). This conclusion has been indicated in a modified form of SERVQUAL which appears to incorporate outcome elements.



The combined elements of process and outcome quality accounted for a very significant level of the variance (71.5%), more than for the process elements alone (45%). By incorporating such an outcome process within the measure, Richard and Allaway (1993) claim that this modified version has a predictive capability of consumer choice. The predictive quality of the SERVQUAL variant has yet however to be replicated consistently in other studies. Despite the claims, the issue of process and outcome quality does weaken the validity of the SERVQUAL measure in its original form. Other authors of service quality measures, for example Grönroos, (1982), even though this was earlier than Parasuraman et al.'s (1985, 1988) conception, it incorporated both input and output elements by considering service quality under the dimensions of technical, functional and quality of reputation. The technical quality attended to the outcome issues of the service, whereas the others considered the process of the service encounter.

There is the difficulty however which does not seem to be identified by some of the key researchers in the field of service quality, in that the customers may not be able to determine or measure service quality, and its outcome may not be controllable. Mangold and Babakus (1991) argued that outcome quality is missing from Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) measure, basing their research on a U.S. hospital service. The outcome quality of a patient's stay in hospital may or may not be dependent upon the skill of the medical team. It is unlikely in the majority of cases that patients will have detailed knowledge about the medical issues surrounding their situation. Judgement may be significantly more dependant therefore upon process rather than outcome, since the patient would take cognisance of the tangible evidence such as

comfort, hospital food, timeliness of the nurses' routine and the interpersonal skills of the medical staff.

It would appear however that in the process of assessing the SERVQUAL measure, some are identifying that outcome elements of quality are important and provide a better fit and account for a greater degree of variance than considering process quality elements alone. The nature of the service would need to be taken into account to determine whether or not measurement is possible, desirable or the holding of such knowledge can be used to change or influence service quality issues.

#### **5.6.4 Dimensionality**

This issue, as has been discussed earlier in this section has attracted considerable research work and is probably one of the most potent areas which determines that service quality measures in whatever form are not generically applicable across a variety of services. Although Parasuraman et al. (1988) have claimed that the measure can be modified or supplemented to "...fit the characteristics or specific research needs of a particular organisation", there does not seem to be any form of consensus gained through replicated research which has determined that there are a finite number of dimensions that can be applied to service quality. Indeed, it has not been possible to determine this for a particular industry.

It does not appear therefore that any form of measure at the present time could be used generically across service industries mostly due to this difficulty of dimensional constructs. It appears also that the service quality construct of the SERVQUAL measure itself can be represented by a number of different factors. Buttle's (1996)

review of the literature uncovered a variety of factors in a number of studies all purporting to underpin the service quality construct. The number of dimensions of SERVQUAL appeared to vary according to the contextual circumstances and analytical processes that were employed in each study. Supporting this, Carman (1990) identified differences with regard to unexpected loadings upon factors within the service quality construct. This led to Carman (1990) concluding that there were validity and reliability problems with SERVQUAL. It would therefore appear that dimensions aspect of the service quality construct is significantly dependant upon the contextual application of SERVQUAL and its validity is weakened due to the differences produced via similar analytical procedures (Carman 1990).

## **5.7 Operational Criticisms**

Operational criticisms are considered under the headings of (1) Expectations, (2) Item Composition, (3) Polarity, (4) Scale Points, (5) Two Administrations, and (6) Variance Extracted.

### **5.7.1 Expectations**

The element of “expectation” is a fundamental element of the design of the SERVQUAL measure, which has been questioned by some authors because of its (expectations) interpretation. Buttle (1996: p19) suggests that “expectations” plays no significant role in the conceptualisation of service quality on the part of the consumer. The original design of SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1985) defined expectations as “...desires or wants of consumers, i.e. what they felt a service provider should offer rather than would offer”. This differentiation between “should” and “would” has attracted the attention of critics in that the cognitive evaluation by consumers may not be consistent. For example Teas (1993) identifies six different

interpretations of how consumers may evaluate what a service provider “should” offer. This therefore causes difficulties with regards to the measurement instrument interpretation and consequently provides discriminant validity problems.

Although Parasuraman et al. (1991, 1994) modified the measure to incorporate this identified weakness, it did not allay others who were critical of the presence of the dimension of expectations altogether. The weakness identified was with regard to the variability of consumers whose experience, cultural and contextual setting could significantly influence measurement outcomes (Iacobucci 1994). These measurement difficulties were identified in the form of absolute and relative measurement problems. Relating services over time for example could give an expectancy score for a cafe which would not correlate against the same expectancy score in a high status restaurant. In addition, a score obtained in one year would not necessarily equate with the same score some 10 years later. In addition to these problems, consumers could exhibit “tolerance zones”, in which “ideal”, “above minimum” and “far exceeded expectation” respondents’ views; provided all were above a minimum level could be interpreted as favourable irrespective of prior expectation (Iacobucci 1994). This implies that any expectancy measurement is likely to be relative with regard to a short time period and not comparable service industries i.e. the expectancy dimension within the SERVQUAL measure is not generically applicable.

## **5.8 Item Composition**

The SERVQUAL scales each consist of four or five items (Parasuraman et al. 1988, 1991), and as such this is below the minimum needed in many instances to obtain a valid measure of variance, or the context specific meaning of each dimension (Hair et

al. 1998: p98; Buttle 1996). Other studies reported by Buttle (1996) which purport to measure service quality, used between 15 to 48 items (Babakus and Mangold 1992; Bouman and van der Wiele 1992; Carman 1990; Saleh and Ryan 1992). Parasuraman et al. (1991) acknowledge this weakness, but do not substantially alter SERVQUAL, indicating that it can be modified provided "that new items should be similar in form to the existing SERVQUAL items". This does not resolve the problem of the weakness of the SERVQUAL measure with regard to this issue.

### **5.8.1 Polarity**

Babakus and Boller (1992), in their research found bias within the nature of the design of SERVQUAL and negatively interpreted items appeared to load heavily on one factor. Babakus and Mangold (1992) therefore employed a modified form of SERVQUAL with only positively worded items. This is a difficult issue to quantify and verify within results, Parasuraman et al. (1991), in view of this reversed all negatively worded statements to positive ones. This fundamental issue of bias by influencing respondents at the point of information capture can only be effectively measured by triangulation. Any research design must therefore have some other measurement to be able to eliminate this polarity issue if the SERVQUAL instrument is to be used.

### **5.8.2 Scale Points**

Likert type scales of five, six and seven points have been criticised by authors, and each has been supported by others as ideal. Key researchers in the field have not identified which are appropriate, rather suggesting that a contextual situation will determine which is appropriate (Churchill 1999; McDaniel and Gates 1996). Lewis (1993), although not based on substantive empirical evidence, criticises the

SERVQUAL instrument on three major issues. Firstly, questions stating that the omission of descriptions to the numbers 2,3,4,5, and 6 on the scale may influence respondents to extreme values. This aspect is supported by Teas (1993) research in that “non-extreme (non-7) responses” were coded. Some 454 responses of 1200 (120 respondents answering 10 questions each) were classified as “non extreme”. This indicates that 62% of the responses were extreme, (i.e. 7). On face value this is a very high proportion, although this aspect would appear not to have been investigated by other researchers as yet. The second issue identified suggests that the mid-point may cause ambiguity in the mind of the respondent. Further research will have to be conducted via controlled research methods to determine whether or not this problem exists. If present, does it materially cause reliability problems, or can this difficulty be adjusted or eliminated by calibration methods.

An issue identified by Lewis (1993) considers that the scales themselves may not reflect true value because of the itemised rating nature of the scale (only integers are available, eg, 1, 2, 3 not 4.8, 6.7 etc). This criticism is not well justified. Itemised rating scales are an extensively used marketing research tool that have been in existence for a considerable number of years. Where they have been used correctly, they have been established as a valid and reliable means of measuring consumer attitude (Dillon et al. 1994; Churchill, 1999). Although justification was given in the original development of the SERVQUAL scale for the itemised scales used (Parasuraman et al. 1985; 1988), subsequent verification to assess the validity and reliability of the scales themselves via control methods and other methods does not seem to have been undertaken.

This is particularly important in relation to the definition that service quality appears to hold i.e. “similar to attitude” (Parasuraman et al. 1988), or “an attitude” by others (Cronin and Taylor 1994). Substantive evidence is generically available which attests to the use of attitude scales in marketing research theory, (Dillon et al. 1994; Churchill, 1999), but contextual and other issues can render an itemised scale reliable and valid, or useless. This issue is therefore at the present time unresolved. If service quality is conventionally accepted to be an attitude, well established metric measurement scales are available. If it is some other form of cognitive process, it will require a new or different form of valid and reliable scale measurement. In the meantime, attitude scales are used in most instances to measure service quality. It would appear therefore that most authors consider service quality to be an attitude, and integer scales best represent the method of measuring such cognitive processes of consumers, interpreted as interval scales.

### **5.8.3 Two Administrations**

From a pragmatic point of view, two questionnaires are in danger of not being completed well from a respondent who may have a low interest level. Indeed much of the design principles offered by researchers for such paper questionnaires are due to minimising the time taken, and to remove bias due to the design of the instrument (Churchill 1999). With regard to the SERVQUAL instrument, Bouman and van der Wiele (1992) discovered that respondents appeared to be bored and sometimes confused by the administration of E and P versions of SERVQUAL. Others were also critical of the timing of the administration of the SERVQUAL instrument.

Carman (1990) viewed the expectation responses, “of little value” since they were entirely ex-post and relied upon respondent’s memory of the previous three months. A logical extension to this approach would be to attempt to combine the questionnaires. This approach was criticised however by Clow and Vorhies (1993) who found that respondents tended to over or under estimate their expectation/perception response gaps depending upon a positive or negative experience respectively. Respondent fatigue is one of the prime driving forces behind questionnaire design, and although research designers may have good reason to provide a very long research instrument in terms of questionnaire design, pragmatic issues often need to be taken into consideration to obtain results that are accurate from respondents, even though it may not be the complete set of results that are being sought (Churchill 1999). It is important however that in the design of the research tool, in terms of administration, respondent fatigue does not influence the response, and some means of control is identified to verify the responses to eliminate this problem. With regard to the SERVQUAL instrument, although this issue has been criticised, the negative effect, if it exists, of the two administrations has not been either quantified or a means found of eliminating the difficulty.

#### **5.8.4 Variance Extracted**

The mathematical processes involved via principal component analysis to reduce the variety of components of a model into a group of factors, which themselves have described the single construct of service quality has been the most commonly adopted approach. Further to this, Kline (1994) has also suggested that this approach, via “variance extracted” acts as a good method of providing an adequate measure of construct validity. This implies therefore that the greater the variance extracted, the better the measure to describe the construct of service quality. The variance reported



by researchers using the SERVQUAL measure varies from 56% to 71.6% (Parasuraman et al. 1988) and 58.3% (Babakus and Boller 1992). Consistency has not been achieved with regard to the SERVQUAL measure variance measures either across industries or with regard to the methods used. Replication therefore has not been possible. In addition to this, using the SERVQUAL instrument, it has not been possible to achieve higher values of the variance extracted given above, nor has it been possible to effectively replicate these studies either within similar or dissimilar industries. What is left therefore is some abstract component(s) which account for a range of variance of some 30% to 50% after the measure's constructs have been removed which is a substantive value.

## **5.9 Other Measures which Purport to Measure Service Quality.**

Later methods consider a range of approaches which include service value chain (Heskett et al. 1994, 1997), modified SERVQUAL approaches (Carman 1990; Saleh and Ryan 1992; Bouman and van der Wiele 1992; Teas 1994) and performance evaluation approach (SERVPERF, Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994). These will be dealt with under three headings, firstly service value chain, then those which have modified the SERVQUAL measure incorporating other components, and finally those which have adopted performance evaluation methods.

### **5.9.1 Service Value Chain.**

Heskett (1994, 1997) proposed a service profit chain model that attributes a service organisation's performance with its customers and employees. Their research was based upon a number of field studies of service organisations. Although this work unifies much of the work that attempts to link the three elements of the service value chain (Lau 2000), its recency requires more research to be undertaken before the exact

nature of the relationship of the model's elements can be understood and a reliable and valid method of measurement established.

### 5.9.2 Modified SERVQUAL Measures.

The base from which the concept of service quality is drawn is questioned by many authors. For example Buttle (1996) includes a list of such related constructs such as customer (dis)satisfaction, customer retention and defection, behavioural intention, attitude to service provider or organisation choice. Research into the relation of these constructs has been in part undertaken (Parasuraman et al. 1991; Richard and Allaway 1993), but established and replicated relationships have yet to be determined, if this is possible. Teas (1993) investigated the use of ideal performance within the SERVQUAL measure, incorporating it as a modification. Teas (1993) indicates that the ideal performance, or the "wished for" performance is omitted from the SERVQUAL measure and this is a fundamental issue which should not be left out. Teas (1993) argues that classic ideal point as defined by others (Miller 1977; Swan and Trawick 1980; Prakash 1984), is not compatible with the SERVQUAL PE interpretation of expectations within this measure. Teas (1993) modifies the linear SERVQUAL PE measure by introducing an ideal point approach, suggesting that the relationship is identified by the following mathematical formula, as an example for a SERVQUAL measure single attribute:

$$MQ_i = -1 [|P_i - 1| - |E_i - 1|]$$

Where:

MQ= modified SERVQUAL measure of the stimulus *i*

$P_i$  = The individual's perceptions of the performance of stimulus *i* with respect to the single attribute.

$E_i$  = The individual's quality expectation norm for the single attribute - conceptualised as a feasible ideal point

1 = The ideal amount of the single attribute - the classic attitudinal measure ideal point.

This varies the performance/expectation relationship output quality (modified quality) in such a way that if performance exceeds the ideal point, this will then produce less rather than favourable evaluations as predicted by the PE measure (Teas 1993). This measure brings with it however many of the criticisms which stand for SERVQUAL, for example the scale measurement and attitude construct problems. In addition the measure itself also introduces some anomalies in that under certain conditions, where the intermediate ideal point is exceeded by performance, negative values are returned. This measure indeed represents this, but there is a set of conditions where expectation is equal to the ideal point.  $E - I$  under these circumstances cancels each other out. If performance marginally exceeds  $I$ , (or  $E$ ) then a negative return of quality is returned, clearly a strange result. Further to this, if performance is slightly under the value of  $E$  and  $I$ , a negative value is also returned. Therefore, under these conditions, if performance is slightly higher or lower than the expected/ideal value a negative result of quality is returned in both instances, a result incongruous with expected values of service quality and difficult to envisage as a situation realistic in terms of service quality. This approach however has not been replicated successfully since this modification was introduced and no further criticisms of this mathematical measure appear to have been offered in the literature.

### **5.10 SERVPERF: Performance Measure Approach**

Arising after the challenges to the  $P - E$  measures of Parasuraman et al. (1985; 1988), Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) provided a performance based measure of service quality (SERVPERF) which explained more of the variance for a given situation than did SERVQUAL. In their subsequent discussion of the SERVQUAL and SERVPERF however, Cronin and Taylor (1994) do not dismiss the performance minus

expectations approach, stating: "Our research suggest that the performance minus expectations is an appropriate basis for use in the measurement of service quality." Cronin and Taylor (1994) also support the SERVQUAL measure by stating that in the research published in the 1992 paper, SERVQUAL was statistically significant in two of the four industries. The SERVPERF method however, was statistically significant in three of the industries studied (Cronin and Taylor 1992; 1994). It would appear therefore that Cronin and Taylor (1994) offer some empirical evidence to support SERVQUAL i.e. it does account for a significant proportion of the variance in measurement, but this is contextually affected and the performance based approach accounts for more of the variance and therefore provides a better measure. Despite a stated improvement, SERVPERF has not been as extensively tested as yet by subsequent authors as has the SERVQUAL measure. It has been tested however in two industries, McAlexander et al. (1994) has demonstrated SERVPERF's superiority over SERVQUAL for the dental care industry. This direct measurement of performance appears to be gaining preference over the SERVQUAL for evaluating the service quality construct.

### **5.11 Industry Specific Focus of Services Marketing for Sport and Recreation Providers.**

Service quality has been studied in a number of related leisure areas, Saleh and Ryan (1991; 1992), Akan (1995) and Gabbie and O'Neill (1997) adapted the measure for application in hotels. Taylor et al. (1993) used recreational services in the USA to test SERVQUAL's reliability. Whilst the researchers used this methodology to consider aspects of service quality, the criticisms of this measure still stand, particularly if the services in question are not homogenous (Scott and Shief 1993). This leads to

transaction specific problems if consumers do not use all of the services offered, which is most likely in a modern day sport and recreation or leisure facility setting (Williams 1998).

The measurement of "excellence" by a customer in comparison to a "facility of the same generic type" is also problematic. The respondent may or may not have the necessary experience or knowledge and sport and recreation facilities are notoriously variable in size and provision. If Dale's (1994: p125) "world class company" criteria are applied, and respondents were comparing their local facility to one of an international "Best in the World" standard, this could bring into doubt the ability of a respondent to effectively judge against criteria which could be considered as established norms of the services of which they are using. These could, if the comparisons were not determined for a similar service standard, reduce the reliability of the measuring instrument.

Williams (1998) attempted to use the SERVQUAL measure in the public sector covering a number of leisure related organisations, and concluded that this measure by itself did not equate well when compared to the equivalent private sector. Certainly one of the difficulties noted was the lower perceived expectation by customers of a public sector service: "(respondents)...explained that they did not expect to receive an excellent service from a public sector organisation" (Williams 1998: p107), but this by itself should have been accommodated by SERVQUAL. The "SERVPERF" measure however (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994) evaluates only performance of the service in question, and eliminates the need for such comparisons. Other difficulties

were identified however with regard to the administration of SERVQUAL in the Williams (1998: p103) study in that it was applied to a range of leisure services, "...the research sites were chosen for their diversity of management cultures and core services". No controls were suggested in the Williams (1998) study which considered each of the sites with regard to the SERVQUAL measure. This would have determined if the inefficiency was due to the measure or contextual differences across each of the research sites.

It would appear from these studies therefore that the use of the SERVQUAL measure may not be appropriate for this area of the public sector, but that the SERVPERF may prove more efficient and result in a better measure for service quality, since many of the criticisms offered against the SERVQUAL measure, particularly with regard to the expectations consideration, are eliminated in the performance only evaluation of SERVPERF. It is therefore hypothesised as a result of the extant review of the literature the following:

- H<sub>3</sub>** "SERVPERF" is appropriate for measuring the construct of Service Quality.
- H<sub>4</sub>** Public sector sport and recreation providers that indicate good service quality as measured by "SERVPERF", perform better as indicated by direct measurements of income and attendance.

## **5.12 Summary**

The issue of service quality measurement is far from resolved in terms of a measure being available which has been empirically tested, replicated and generally accepted as a method of measuring this construct. The most significant influence in recent years is that of the SERVQUAL measure. In only a few industries has it determined

some of the factors which evaluate service quality. Buttle (1996) questions some aspects of the validity and reliability issues of the measure by identifying critical and face validity questions such as:

1. Do consumers actually evaluate service quality in terms of expectations and perceptions?
2. Do the five dimensions of SERVQUAL incorporate the full range of service quality attributes?
3. Do consumers incorporate "outcome" evaluations into their assessments of service quality?

Researchers have found instances where SERVQUAL does substantively cover these issues, whereas others have found it does not. Earlier methods of measuring service quality have not been as extensively tested by subsequent authors, for example the Grönroos, model (1984). Fundamental issues therefore remain outstanding regarding the theoretical and operationalisation of the service quality construct. An agreed consensus within the literature has not established the nature of the service quality construct e.g. whether or not it is an attitude. Despite the criticisms, SERVQUAL remains at the present time a significant measurement instrument within the service quality arena (Rust and Zahorik 1993). Buttle (1996: p25) states: "SERVQUAL seems to be moving rapidly towards institutionalised status." The most significant issue however is the apparent contextual sensitivity of the SERVQUAL measure. Differing studies across a range of industries report a variety of results using this measure.

Arising after the challenges to the P - E measures of Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988), the Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) performance based measure of service quality (SERVPERF) explained more of the variance for a given situation than did the

SERVQUAL measure. Using a number of supporting works, (Babakus and Boller 1992; Babakus and Mangold 1992; Oliver 1993) Cronin and Taylor (1992: p56) reiterate and reinforce the statement: "...little if any theoretical or empirical evidence supports the relevance of the expectations minus performance gap as the basis for measuring service quality". In their later study, Cronin and Taylor (1994: p125) do not dismiss the performance minus expectations approach, stating: "Our research suggests that the performance minus expectations is an appropriate basis for use in the measurement of service quality." Cronin and Taylor (1994) support in part the SERVQUAL measure by identifying research published in their 1992 paper, reporting that the SERVQUAL measure was statistically significant in two of the four industries studied, although it (SERVQUAL) performed less well in comparison to the SERVPERF method, which was statistically significant in three of the industries studied (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994). On balance therefore it would appear that Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) offer some empirical evidence to support the SERVQUAL measure i.e. it does account for a significant proportion of the variance in measurement, but this is contextually affected and the performance based approach accounts for more of the variance and therefore provides a better measure.

The closeness of structure of SERVQUAL to SERVPERF as a useful instrument does suggest that the latter may prove to be a better measure of the service quality construct. The rigorous testing of SERVQUAL, and the absence of expectations in the SERVPERF instrument, particularly when applied to managers and staff indicate that the SERVPERF measure might usefully overcome some of the criticisms offered against SERVQUAL, and result in a reliable and valid measurement instrument for the measurement of service quality.





## **Chapter 6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapters 4 and 5 have specified the research area, market orientation and service quality measurement in a sport and recreation setting. This, combined with the other chapters enabled the clarification of the research objectives and development of the research hypotheses. The next stage is the development of an appropriate methodology to achieve those objectives and test the hypotheses. The methodology is the framework of the overall study, outlining which information is to be gathered, their sources, and the procedures that are to be used (Saunders et al. 2000).

This section therefore describes the basis for the methodological foundations of this research, integrating the various methods that are appropriate and available. This research approach was adopted to investigate the market orientation and service quality measurement of the public sector sport and recreation providers.

### **6.2 Background to Research Design**

There is a need to develop an appropriate research methodology to achieve the research objectives. This is often described via a research design or plan. Kinnear and Taylor (1996: p129) define research design as a "...basic plan which guides the data collection and analysis phases of the research project. It is the framework that specifies the type of information to be collected, the sources of data and the data collection procedure. A good design will make sure that the information gathered is consistent with the study objectives and that the data are collected by accurate and economical procedures. There is no standard or idealised research design as to guide

the researcher, since many different designs may accomplish the same objectives". Research is commonly described under three major headings, exploratory, descriptive and causal research (Dillon et al. 1994; Kinnear and Taylor 1996; Churchill 1995; Aaker et al. 1998). Research design however is not exclusively restricted to each of these, but they do form the foundations of a design. A combined design can be tailored to suite the requirements of the research area in question.

### **6.3 Combined Research Designs.**

The use of a single methodology or a combined design can only be determined upon the needs of the research. The single methodology design however, advocated by a number of authors is supported by arguments that are pragmatic in nature, e.g. time constraints, the need to limit the scope of the study, and the difficulty of publishing the findings (Creswell 1994). Further to this, although a research design arises as a result of the needs and objectives of the study in question, a single design approach is unlikely to provide the necessary methodology to underpin an investigation (Yin 1994). This may be due to the nature of the study and the need for triangulation for reliability and validity requirements. Consequently, there are no prescribed combinations of research design for given studies.

The second stage of this research programme is to complete the primary research objectives of this study to identify the dimensional constructs of market orientation and service quality if they exist in any meaningful terms via quantitative and qualitative research methods. This approach will therefore require a combined research design incorporating quantitative and qualitative research methods. Major

functions of this approach as a part of case study design and advantages identified by Greene et al. (1989) are as follows:

1. Triangulation in the classic sense of seeking convergence of results.
2. Complementary, in that overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon may emerge.
3. Developmentally, wherein the first method is used sequentially to help inform the second method.
4. Initiation, wherein contradictions and fresh perspectives emerge.
5. Expansion, wherein the mixed methods add scope and breadth to a study.

The strengths of a qualitative approach also bring richness and depth to an investigation, with particular reference to the following issues (Miles and Huberman 1994):

1. Focus on naturally occurring events.
2. Emphasis on a specific case.
3. Close proximity to the situation.
4. Richness and holism.
5. Emphasis on people "lived experience".
6. Best strategy for exploring a new area.
7. Strong potential for testing hypothesis.
8. Supplement quantitative data.

Yin (1994) also considers the wider values of combined designs and states that explanatory (causal) research can be complemented by exploratory and descriptive research, and that research strategies should be considered from a pluralistic view. As a result, different strategies can be used for all three major divisions, namely exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (causal) research. Yin (1994) differentiates the ability to use a variety of research strategies which are determined under the three conditions: (a) the type of research question posed, (b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events, and (c) the degree of focus on

contemporary as opposed to historical events. Yin (1994: p6) summarises relevant situations for different research strategies available to a researcher as follows:

Strategy	Form of research question	Requires control over behavioural events	Focuses on contemporary events
experiment	how, why	yes	yes
survey	who, what, where, how many, how much	No	yes
archival analysis	who, what, where, how many, how much	No	yes/no
history	how, why	No	yes
case study	how, why	No	yes

**Table 2 Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies (Yin 1994: p6)**

The identification of cause and effect between variables is perhaps one of the preferable approaches to research, in that the results can be used in a predictive capacity. The requirements for this causal or experimental methodology need the researcher to be able to manipulate variables and constrain various aspects of the research environment. This may either be not possible nor practicable in a work environment as is the case in this study. It would not be possible to manipulate various treatments of the functions of a working sport and recreation department either effectively or meaningfully. The remaining techniques however do enable a satisfactory inquiry methodology, particularly the combined research design which uses a variety of techniques which would satisfy validity and reliability measurement requirements. The case study approach is one which is being used more frequently in recent years as a research methodology incorporating a “combined approach”, particularly when “how and why” questions are being posed and the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life-context (Yin 1994).

### **6.3.1 Case Study Approach**

This approach would appear to be viewed from different perspectives. Yin (1994) defines a case study as the study of a phenomenon within its natural context, where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clear. Schramm (1971) describes the purpose of a case study in that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions; why they were taken, how they were implemented and with what result. This implies that the decision or set of decisions are the central tenet of the case study approach. Creswell (1998) defines a case study from a wider perspective as an exploration of a bounded system or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. The bounded system is described as being bounded by time and place, and it is the case being studied: a program, an event or an activity or individuals.

This study is being considered within its natural context. The decisions are those of market orientation and service quality, the parameters of which have been determined in previous studies. The bounded system are the sport and recreation providers of the public sector. These are discrete departments, clearly identified by both organisational structures of local authorities and the facilities which are required to provide the environment of this service. The intention of this study is also to determine the decisions taken with regard to market orientation and service quality, and to consider these aspects from a variety of sources of information for the purposes of triangulation to satisfy reliability and validity criteria.

It has been established that the case study approach has two technically critical features, which are formulated around the phenomenon and context of the situations

being studied Yin (1994: p12). Firstly, with regard to the case study as an empirical study: "...investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". Yin (1994) states the case study method would be used when it was evident that contextual situations were required to be covered. This approach also provides a reliable and valid method since it relies upon multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulation fashion (Yin 1994). Case studies are therefore an all encompassing, comprehensive research strategy and not either a data collection tactic or merely a design feature (Stoecker 1991). It is important however that this method can be shown to possess reliable and valid measures. These are summarised in table 3.

Tests	Case study tactic	Phase of research in which tactic occurs
<b>Construct validity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of multiple sources of evidence</li> <li>• Establish chain of evidence</li> <li>• Have key informants review draft case study report</li> </ul>	Data collection
		Data collection Composition
<b>Internal validity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do pattern matching</li> <li>• Do explanation building</li> <li>• Do time-series analysis</li> </ul>	Data analysis
		Data analysis Data analysis
<b>External validity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use replication logic in multiple case studies</li> </ul>	Research design
<b>Reliability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use case study protocol</li> <li>• Develop case study database</li> </ul>	Data collection
		Data collection

Table 3 Reliability and Validity of Case Study Method. (Yin 1994: p33)

Similar justifications for these tests have been given by Kidder and Judd (1986) as follows:

**Construct Validity:** Establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied which results in the clear understanding of the concepts under investigation, and their active role within the phenomenon. The use of several methods of data collection may strengthen the construct validity of a case study (Yin, 1994; Denzin 1984).

- Internal Validity:** This is the extent to which identified relationships have not been caused by other factors which have not been acknowledged by the researcher. This is particularly important when establishing a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships. In descriptive studies however the importance of this item is reduced since the identification of causal relationships is not one of the parameters of such a study.
- External Validity:** This refers to establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalised to other similar cases. A problem of external validity is the determination of what is a similar case, since many cases will operate within slightly different contexts. For example, market orientation studies have been applied to different organisations which operate in different scenarios, and product/service settings.
- Reliability:** This is the demonstration that the operations of a study - such as the data collection procedures, if taken at the same time could theoretically be repeated, with the same results (internal reliability), or could be consistent in other contexts (external reliability).

The case study methodology therefore provides in itself a valid and reliable method upon which a research design can be based, especially when other research techniques are incorporated to establish triangulation in an academically rigorous manner.

#### **(a) Advantages of the Case Study Approach**

In addition therefore to the established validity and reliability claims, the case study approach is a strong and useful methodology for research within leisure. McCormick (1996) has outlined a number of advantages which are directly applicable to this study and are summarised below:

1. It allows the grounding of social processes within their natural settings. An advantage for this research is that it allows the researcher "...to see in contextualised action how theories...are enacted." (McCormick 1996: p367)
2. A holistic piece of research may develop from the case study. Multiple lines of action and strategy are open to the investigator. The researcher can continually develop and refine unexpected findings, and changes in research objectives.



Case studies therefore have an emergent quality, that larger more quantitative studies do not possess.

3. The case study allows a sense of time and history to develop. One assumption of the case study is that it is not possible to develop understanding by looking only at the contemporary situation.
4. The case study permits the confirmation and/or disconfirmation, or the refinement, of existing theory (as of course do other methods), as well as less commonly the generation of new theory. This is particularly important in this study, since major parameters of the study are the confirmation/disconfirmation of the market orientation and service quality constructs.

The combined approach of this study which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative measures therefore lends itself to a strong internal validity measure, since factors not considered within the quantitative section of the study may emerge during the qualitative stage. With regard to the confirmation of existing theory and/or the generation of new theory, this approach is particularly important in this study, since major parameters of the study are the confirmation/disconfirmation of the market orientation and service quality constructs.

### **6.3.2 Industry Specific Focus of the Study**

The focus of this research is upon market orientation and service quality measurement for public sector organisations providing sport and recreation activities. Initially there is a need to be able to select suitable cases of local authority sports and recreation provision that place high priority with regard to the marketing activity and service quality provision. The exploratory stage therefore required some means by which suitable cases could be selected for further study. Subsequent to this, the selected cases would then be subject to further study. This therefore provided two stages for this research design:

Stage 1: Exploratory study to select suitable cases for further study.

Stage 2: Case study analysis of selected local authorities.

## **6.4 Stage 1: Selection of Suitable Cases for Further Study.**

### **6.4.1 Exploratory Research.**

This is described in its various forms as used when insights are being sought into the general nature of a problem, the possible decision alternatives and relevant variables that need to be considered. Typically there is little prior knowledge on which to build or firm preconceptions held. As a consequence, the methods adopted are often highly flexible, unstructured and often qualitative. In addition to this, it is accepted practice for researchers to change the research procedure as the vaguely defined initial problem is transformed into one with a more precise meaning (Churchill 1995). These type of studies therefore rarely use detailed questionnaires or involve probability sampling plans. More typical is the use of literature surveys, experience surveys, focus groups and the analysis of selected case studies (Selliz et al. 1976).

In this study however, a substantive body of knowledge concerning marketing and service quality has been established. But the literature review has determined that the existence of marketing as an important activity is not a uniform across all local authorities (Cousins 1990; Collins and Glyptis 1992; Walsh 1994; Doherty et al. 1996, 1998; Day et al. 1998; Rees 1998; Wakefield and Bush 1998; Novatorov and Crompton 2001). Due to the inconsistent presence of marketing activity within local authority leisure centres, a method of identifying suitable cases of (a) those who placed marketing and its techniques as a high priority and (b) a method which had a sufficient reliability measurement and comparative property was required.

A combined approach using a literature review and the Analytic Hierarchy Process (discussed later in this chapter in more detail) was found to be an appropriate exploratory technique to screen for suitable cases via a sample of the local authorities in the UK. Therefore, the Analytic Hierarchy Process may be a useful indicator of the elements being measured (marketing management, strategic marketing planning and strategic marketing), but additional methods would be needed to establish the market orientation and other constructs in a service setting.

The Analytic Hierarchy Process was identified as an approach that satisfied the criteria for selecting cases, as each response, due to the nature of this research method was shown to be internally reliable (Saaty, 1980). The AHP section of the study, which provides the inconsistency measurement is a convenient means by which reliability can effectively be measured (Wind and Saaty 1980).

Therefore, the Analytic Hierarchy Process may be a useful indicator of the elements being measured (marketing management, strategic marketing planning and strategic marketing), but additional methods would be needed to establish the market orientation and other constructs in a service setting.

The process of the Analytic Hierarchy Process, which produces the derived ratio scale which was also internally reliable, combined with factor analysis (which provides an adequate validity check) would enable a suitable means by which the priority of the marketing elements under test could be evaluated.

#### **6.4.2 The Analytic Hierarchy Process: Background**

Studies have shown (Newell, Shaw and Simon 1958) that decisions in organisations are broken down into tiers appropriate to the management level of the organisation. Decisions are considered against a number of factors. It is therefore extremely rare that the solution to a decision within a business scenario will be reached based solely upon one criteria. The literature is replete with a variety strategic approaches appropriate to marketing. They do not generally however provide an immediate measure with regard to the priority relationship of the elements to each other within a constrained set of choices. In a situation where resources are carefully metered, it is unlikely that a respondent would be able to place a number of items at an equal priority, although the respondent could report this is as so within a typical Likert style questionnaire. Other research methods would then have to be employed to verify if the responses were reliable. An established methodology that provides a means of establishing the importance of combined items in a hierarchical format is that of the Analytic Hierarchy Process.

Marketing as an activity for sport and recreation providers is a relatively recent technique, and 20 years ago was considered not to be effectively present as a significant management activity (Cowell 1979). More recent studies however have shown a greater penetration of marketing activity, but development has been fragmented and not cohesive across all authorities generally (Collins and Glyptis 1992; Walsh 1994; Doherty et al. 1996, 1998). There is a need consequently to identify sport and recreation providers that place marketing on a relatively high emphasis and appear to show consistency in their decision making with regard to marketing.

This approach will also identify the consistency with which these priorities are determined. It is extremely unlikely that within an environment which is financially restrained and where major resources are determined by a political process, that all elements being considered can be attributed the same priority. The multi-criterion decision choice model however will indicate if the priorities selected are in an appropriate relation with each other, or not, particularly with respect to consistency. Values returned which are above the threshold level (0.02) are indicative of problems with regard to the marketing and related decision making processes. These may be due either to the respondent, or represent a reflection of organisational difficulties. This stage will produce a set of four cases which can be further investigated using a combined design approach.

#### **6.4.3 Analytic Hierarchy Process: Methodology**

The AHP methodology and its application to marketing problems was considered as early as 1980 (Wind and Saaty 1980). Illustrative applications covered the following areas:

1. The portfolio decisions of a firm whose management is concerned with the determination of the desired target portfolio and allocation of resources among its components.
2. Determination of the directions for new product development and
3. Generation and evaluation of marketing mix strategies.

It is the final area (item 3) given above that the model is used in the sampling process to provide organisations for the case study evaluation. AHP is used to give relative priorities of differing alternatives within a rational multicriterion choice decision model. This is based on a multivariate approach. Its specific application occurs where the decision choice can be represented hierarchically by at least two levels or sets of criteria: objectives for evaluation, and activities or alternative courses of action (Saaty 1977, 1980). Other examples of the model and modifications after these make very

minor modifications to the methodology, but all discuss the strengths of AHP and give high regard to its use within marketing decision making processes. These include: Consumer purchase choice determination, (Bahmani et al. 1986; Bahmani and Blumberg 1987; Javalgi et al. 1989), Marketing Mix Strategy and New Product Development (Wind and Saaty 1980), Advertising budgeting (Mazanec 1986), and Advertising Creativity (Davies and Saunders 1990).

**(a) The Multicriterion Decision Model.**

The analysis of numerous marketing problems exist within literature which are based upon empirical research, where organisations have used mathematical models to indicate ideal solutions against differing background scenarios. There has not as yet however, been a model which reviews the decision making processes of organisations with the purpose of evaluating and rating marketing capability. This is despite the literature heralding examples of both good and bad practice of this methodology.

The purpose of this research is therefore to determine from the literature review those elements of strategic marketing and strategic marketing planning and marketing management which are ideally exclusively and exhaustively each essential to these processes. The AHP methodology enables them to be analysed in a manner which is consistent with decision making in organisations i.e. in comparison to each other and structured in a logical hierarchy.

The approach adopted consisted of two stages, initially exploratory and secondly, should the first stage be satisfactory an AHP model quantitative method in conjunction with factor analysis.

**(b) AHP Quantitative Model Stage.**

The hierarchical model is used within the AHP methodology to identify those organisations that consider marketing management and service quality elements as a high priority. Combined with suitable inconsistency measurements the AHP process provides a derived ratio scale of priorities for each case.

After factor analysis has been applied to these AHP results, this will show any underlying traits or dimensions which group the elements according to the literature review, i.e. the dimensions of strategic marketing, strategic marketing planning and marketing management, if they exist. This provides a view of the link between practitioners in the field and the literature review.

Secondly, from these results, four cases will be selected for in depth analysis that appear to satisfy the criteria with regard to the high priority of marketing elements within their decision making criteria and consistency measurement. The next section provides a more rigorous and detailed treatment of the AHP process, and its relationship to the second stage of the research in providing suitable organisations for further in depth research.

The AHP is a ratio scaled method used primarily to assist a decision maker in evaluating alternatives via hierarchies (Saaty 1977, 1980). With respect to decision making, hierarchies are basic to the human way of breaking reality into manageable segments (Newell, Shaw and Simon 1958). In addition to this, AHP is particularly

useful when the attributes and the decision alternatives are considered intangible, or there is a high level of subjectivity involved (Armacost and Hosseini 1994).

AHP is similar to conjoint analysis where decisions are made upon multicriteria that are considered jointly. Conjoint analysis is based on the trade-off concept, which presents the respondent with a given problem i.e. the trade off task. The AHP allows those who are closest to the problem (the decision makers directly involved, or DM's) to identify and structure a customised hierarchy representing their multicriterion problem. From this a trade-off of relative preferences takes place (Wind and Saaty 1980). The basic AHP methodology structures the decisions within a tiered hierarchical structure, producing a series of simple reciprocal pair-wise comparison matrices to be analysed shown diagrammatically as follows:

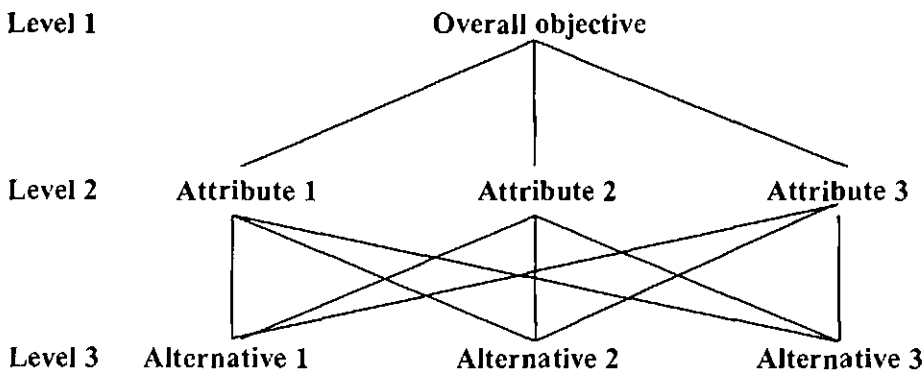


Table 4 AHP Decision Making for Leaders (Saaty 1995)

Each level of the hierarchy requires the decision maker to provide the relative importance of each attribute with respect to the focus, i.e. the relative preference for each decision alternative, with respect to each attribute. AHP uses pair wise comparisons to estimate the relative importance or preference for each pair of



elements of a given level with respect to each element in the preceding level of the hierarchy. Each expressed preference is an estimate of the ratio of the priorities or weights of the compared elements. The eigenvector approach is used to determine the invariant solutions to the produced matrices and represent estimates of priorities of elements based on the pair wise comparisons.

**(c) The Mechanism of the AHP.**

This methodology provides the framework for data collection. The analysis of this provides the basis of the Analytic Hierarchy Process. Structurally, the hierarchy is broken down into a series of pair comparison matrices, the participants are asked to evaluate the off diagonal relationship in one half of each matrix, the reciprocals of which are placed in the transposed positions.

The evaluation process requires the respondent to evaluate pairs in the matrix, and each pair is evaluated separately, indicating the extent one item of a pair dominates the other with respect to the elements from the next level in the hierarchy. Numerical judgement requires an appropriate scale, which Saaty (1977) determined to be reliable by experiment as nine. Resulting matrices offer the necessary data for calculating priorities of the various courses of action. Similarly, when the objectives are evaluated with respect to their importance under the various scenarios, it allows for the calculation of the relative importance of the various objectives.

#### (d) Measurement of Judgement

For each scenario, passive judgements were made on a 17 point integer scale with 1 being the mid point and 9 on either extreme. Reliability for this scaling method was proven by Saaty (1977) and described further in marketing applications (Wind and Saaty 1980). The scale is shown as follows:

Intensity of Importance	Definition	Explanation
1	Equal importance	Two activities contribute equally to the objective
3	Weak importance of one over another	Experience and judgement slightly favour one activity over another
5	Essential or strong importance	Experience and judgement strongly favour one activity over another
7	Demonstrated importance	An activity is strongly favoured and its dominance is demonstrated in practice
9	Absolute importance	When compromise is needed
2,4,6,8	Intermediate values between the two adjacent judgements	
Reciprocals of above non-zero	If activity i has one of the above non-zero numbers assigned to it when compared with activity j, then j has the reciprocal value when compared with i.	

Table 5 Scaling Method for Passive Judgements within AHP (Saaty 1977)

#### (e) Priority Measurement and Evaluation

The priorities at each level are stochastically normalised and used to weight the priorities at the lower levels in the hierarchy. The results are then aggregated across the alternatives in order to obtain a preference rating for each decision alternative. With regard to definitions, for each pair wise comparison matrix, local priorities are the computed priorities, and when weighted by priorities from a higher level, are known as global priorities. The AHP starts by decomposing a complex problem into a hierarchy; each level consists of a few manageable elements and each element is, in turn, decomposed into another set of elements. The process continues to the most specific elements of the problem, typically the specific courses of action considered,

which are represented at the lowest level of the hierarchy. A measurement methodology is used to establish priorities among the elements within each stratum of the hierarchy. Evaluation of each set of elements is achieved by pair wise evaluations with respect to each of the elements in a higher stratum.

#### (f) The Inconsistency Value Measurement

Since a set of perfectly consistent judgements produces a consistency index of 0, the consistency ratio will also be zero. A consistency ratio of 1 indicates consistency akin to that which would be achieved if judgements were made at random rather than intelligently. This ratio is called the inconsistency ratio. *The larger the value towards 1 within a range of 0 to 1, the more inconsistent the judgements.*

Inconsistency can result from an improper conceptualisation of the hierarchy, lack of information, a mental lapse, or clerical errors. The importance of accuracy and consistency requires consideration because accurate judgements can be consistent, but consistent judgements need not be accurate. Therefore consistency is necessary, but not sufficient for a good decision (Dyer and Forman 1991).

It has been shown that for a matrix,  $\lambda_{\max} \geq n$  always and that  $\lambda_{\max} - n/(n-1)$  serves as a consistency index which gives the departure from consistency in estimating the ratios of weighting  $w_i/w_j$ , with consistency obtaining if and only if  $\lambda_{\max} = n$ . Consistency is defined by the relation between the ratios of matrix A:  $a_{ij}a_{jk} = a_{ik}$ , which means that if there are  $n$  entries that form a spanning tree, the remainder of the matrix can be generated from them. With regard to values of consistency which are considered good, Saaty and Mariano (1979) established, using a sample size of 500 each, for

different order random entry reciprocal matrices a consistency index from 0 for 1 or 2 element matrices through 0.9 for 4 element matrices to 1.49 for 10 element matrices. A consistency ratio (consistency index as percentage of the appropriate random average consistency) of about 10% is considered very good. When the consistency is poor, more information on the activities being compared with respect to the criterion of comparison is needed, and typically such information gathering may be required followed by another round of judgements (Dyer and Forman 1991).

**(g) Activity Weight Estimation**

Other methods to estimate activity weights, such as least squares and log least squares have been suggested (Saaty 1980). While these methods produce results that are similar to the eigenvector approach, no other method maintains the reciprocal property of the pair wise comparison matrix (known as weak consistency) or produces a comparable measure of the inconsistency index (Saaty 1980). This was confirmed as follows; "The eigenvector method deals with two questions simultaneously, closeness and order. Together, they belong to the field topology of order. The metric idea of closeness is inadequate to judge what is a good approximation to data involving order relations. There is usually a condition which relates order in the derived scale to order in the data. This is precisely the kind of condition captured by the eigenvector, but not the logarithmic least squares estimate." (Saaty 1990: p12).

**(h) Other Axiomatic Foundation Considerations of AHP**

Other considerations important within this methodology are; rank reversal/rank order, preservation, and transitivity.

### Rank Reversal or Rank Order Preservation

Further to the axiomatic foundations discussed previously, the aspect of rank reversal, is of crucial consideration. The AHP hierarchy structure, as mentioned previously, requires that higher tiers are independent of the lower tiers, such that decisions made in later comparisons have no effect on those of a higher level. When this dependency occurs, it is known as rank reversal, and described as "...a system with feedback" by Saaty (1986). This invalidates one of the previous axiomatic foundations required for the AHP to work effectively. To eliminate this problem if it is deemed to exist, Saaty (1995) introduced an ideal mode comparison which provides a reference point, eliminating the rank reversal problem. This does not arise however if a traditional dominance hierarchy is used, which can be verified by appropriate questioning of the respondents.

### Transitivity

This is determined via the "inconsistency" measurement. Consider three players, A, B, and C. Under expected circumstances, if for example in a game of chess, A were to beat B decisively, and B were to beat C decisively, similar to consistency principles, it would be expected that A would beat C decisively should they compete. This however does not allow the consideration to tactical playing where C could have identified weaknesses either in A's approach, or the conditions under which they are operating, which could advantage C and disadvantage A possibly resulting in C beating A. The indication of transitivity is via the "inconsistency index", and levels above the 0.10 significance values warrant further investigation, although values below 0.20 are considered acceptable (Saaty 1980). High inconsistency index levels do not necessarily mean errors, they could indicate necessary tactical approaches required for

the decision making processes to be adopted effectively. For selection of suitable cases however, inconsistency values below 0.20 are therefore considered acceptable.

#### **6.4.4 AHP : Application, Model Development and Structure.**

The general process of the AHP, consists of four main stages,

- 1 Building the multicriterion decision model (or MCDM).
- 2 Making judgements.
- 3 Computing algorithms.
- 4 Interpreting the data.

The structure and elements of the AHP marketing model were initially developed from the literature review. This established firstly the levels of the hierarchy of the model, and secondly the elements which were contained within each level. The model design suggested that nine elements in any grouping is the maximum possible due to a limit of decision making cognisance. This model provides two levels of analysis. Firstly each of the major headings are considered against each other, providing initial comparisons and relative priorities. Secondly, each of the three groupings components will be compared against each other, and combined with the relative priorities of the prior level will give relative priorities for each of the 27 components.

The AHP methodology, in producing a derived ratio scale enables a factor analytic approach to be adopted of the responses. This would determine whether or not there was an underlying trend with regard to the perception of the responses gained across the sample and provide a useful validity check.

## **6.5 Stage 2: Case Study Analysis Of Selected Local Authorities.**

The AHP approach could not however determine the dimensional constructs of market orientation, nor of service quality. To evaluate these constructs requires a different and rigorous approach based upon works recently developed in this area.

Further to this, although a number of generic articles have been written concerning the subject of marketing and the public sector, (Kotler and Levy 1969; Mokwa 1981; Crompton and Lamb 1986; Kotler and Roberto 1989; Kotler and Andreason 1991; Loveday 1991; Collins and Glyptis 1992; Smith and Saker 1992; Graham 1994; Kester and Barns 1994; Walsh 1994; Doherty et al. 1996, 1998) this industry area has not received much attention in the academic literature with regard to the subject of market orientation. This is despite marketing as a working concept being generically accepted in this service area, and its application is no longer in question. A number of studies having been conducted regarding the marketing efficacy of leisure centres (Yorke 1984; Cowell 1979; Collins and Glyptis 1992; Dibb 1995; Doherty et al. 1996, 1998).

### **6.5.1 Quantitative Phase of Stage 2 of the Study.**

Two measurement instruments were used for this part of stage 2 of the study, and were designed to capture two dimensional constructs, that of market orientation and service quality. These, and the respondents chosen to complete these surveys are considered next.

#### **(a) Market Orientation Measurement Instrument**

The MARKOR scale of Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993) has been developed using a number of techniques including factor analysis to determine validity. Further to this,

Kohli et al. (1993) developed a measurement scale built upon the work of Kohli and Jaworski (1990, 1993) by undergoing a process of generation and purification of scale items. This process included literature review, field work, anonymous review, and a variety of statistical tests including factor analysis. Also included were the tests of Chi square, Joreskog and Sorbom's goodness of fit index (GFI), the rescaled non-centrality parameter (NCP), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the admissibility of the model solution, the number of significant residuals (NSR), and their distribution across the elements of the residual covariance matrix and in the Q-plot. The purpose of these latter tests was to establish the convergent validity of the marketing orientation scale, in that if a construct or trait exists it should be measurable by a number of methods. This then eliminates the event that the construct or trait being measured is nothing more than an artefact of the measurement method (Churchill 1995: p538). This study by Kohli et al. (1993) was one of the most thorough in terms of scale development evaluation, and they (Kohli et al. 1993) were somewhat critical of other market orientation studies in that only a very few, of which the Narver and Slater (1990) was not included, undertook any form of validity tests using factor analysis and other statistical methods.

Commenting further that a number of studies had concentrated upon antecedents and consequences of market orientation. The Narver and Slater (1990) construct has not been subject to such scale development validation. In addition to this, it has been subject to criticism (Sigaw and Diamantopoulos, 1994). It has also not been as widely applied as is the MARKOR construct (Diamantopoulos and Hart 1993; Pitt et al. 1996; Selnes et al. 1996; Balbanis et al. 1997). The MARKOR (Kohli et al. 1993)



measurement instrument was therefore considered to be more appropriate for the purposes of this study.

#### **(b) Service Quality Measurement Instrument**

Government provision identified as “public sector” is however often described as “difficult to measure” (Zink 1990), especially because of the intangible nature of service quality (Scott and Shief 1993). In comparison to the extensive research work using the SERVQUAL model in the commercial sector, not for profit examples are also, in relative terms of numbers of studies, low. The one exception is the study by Williams (1998) who applied SERVQUAL across a range of leisure services. In this instance leisure was considered in its widest sense and included an amusement park, art gallery, museum, theatre, golf course and leisure centre. In this study SERVQUAL was found not to be an effective measure. Difficulties were found with administration of the instrument and “expectation” issues of a public sector organisation in that customers could not “expect” an excellent service from a public sector organisation (Williams 1998). Other not for profit studies include Chaston (1994) who describes its use in the National Health Service, Donnelly et al. (1995) reviewed the potential of the model to measure service quality in the public sector and Cuthbert (1996a, 1996b) applied the instrument to an higher education institution.

Very little empirical work therefore has been conducted in the public sector sport and recreation services concerning service quality using SERVQUAL, and none using SERVPERF, and neither in conjunction with market orientation studies. This lack of empirical work using the SERVQUAL model in the sport and recreation industry is despite the extensive research and debate being conducted in similar commercial

industry areas, some of which could be considered to be closely related (Saleh and Ryan 1991, 1992; Akan 1995; Gabbie and O'Neill 1997; Johns and Tyas 1996; Taylor et al. 1993).

There have been no studies however which have used the SERVPERF model in the public sector sport and recreation industry in the UK nor market orientation using any of the contemporary studies of this subject. Consequently, the SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor 1992) model was adopted for this stage of the study as a means of measuring the service quality constructs.

#### **(c) Questionnaire Surveys: The Employees Viewpoint**

The difficulty of measuring expectations from the customers' viewpoint has already been extensively noted in the literature review. Indeed the majority of market orientation studies for example have sourced their data from management, attempting to use financial performance data to correlate the discovered dimensional constructs. Service quality studies using the SERVQUAL measure (Parasuraman et al. 1985, 1988) and subsequent studies have concentrated on attempting to consolidate the customers view.

Within service industries however, under appropriate circumstances, front line staff and their customers can establish strong relationships with related behaviour scripts. When service encounters have such strong scripts, the employee and customer are likely to share expectations (Bitner and Booms 1994). Role and script theory, combined with the routine nature of many of the service encounters, suggests that

customers and employees are likely to share a common perspective on service experiences (Shrank and Abelson 1977).

This identifies staff as a useful source with regard to performance evaluation. Employees have been identified as good sources of information on customer attitudes (Schneider 1980; Schneider and Bowen 1985). Limitations however apply in that routine service encounters where repeat experiences occur on a regular basis produce better results (Bitner and Booms 1994; Bowen and Lawler III 1995). Therefore, since many customers of sport and recreation centres attend once or more a week, (in excess of 80%), (Knight, Cavanagh and Page 1997), the employees of sports and recreation centres offer a potentially good source of information.

Studies normally select respondents via sampling methodologies to establish some form of representative group of the population in question (Churchill 1999). The quantitative element of this study however, sent questionnaires to all staff of the departments. This eliminated the need to develop complex criteria and sampling methodology issues.

#### **6.5.2 Qualitative Phase of Stage 2 of the Study.**

The purpose of this part of stage 2 of the study is to provide a mechanism whereby the quantitative studies for each of the selected local authorities can be triangulated with particular reference to convergent validity. This is a means whereby measurements from two differing approaches can be used to evaluate the same construct. For this to

be effective therefore, adequate reliability and validity standards need to be established.

The means by which the qualitative elements can achieve such good validity and reliability standards is to a large extent via the data collection methods. Yin (1994: p80) identifies a number of data sources which can be used in a triangulating fashion and are:

**Documentation:** letters, memoranda and other communiques

Agendas, announcements, minutes of meetings, and other written reports of events.

Administrative documents, proposals, progress reports and other internal documents.

Formal documents or evaluations of the same "site" under study

Newspaper clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media.

**Archival Records:** service records, organisational records:- charts, budgets

**Maps and Charts:-** geographical characteristics

**Lists:** names, commodities etc.

**Interviews:** unstructured, semi-structured and structured.

**Direct Observation:** ranging from casual to structured.

**Participant Observation:** active involvement.

**Physical Artefacts;** physical evidence.

These eight sources of evidence provide a number of possible approaches to case study research. An overriding principle however is the need for multiple sources of evidence to satisfy validity and reliability criteria. It is therefore possible to have a focus of one particular source of evidence, but must be supported by other sources of evidence to enable triangulation and verification of fact (Yin 1994). Local authorities are rich in documentation as well as the availability of staff. This study will therefore use as multiple sources of evidence; documentation, archival records, and interviews.

**(a) Documentation.**

The list of items that is suggested by Yin (1994: p80) as available to be reviewed under this heading is given above. Documentation of staff and relation meetings, (minutes, agenda, etc.) will be reviewed of each local authority. The effect of the Public Access to Information Acts currently will enable review of documents which would otherwise be deemed "sensitive". It is the researchers experience however that once a rapport is established and confidentiality of the study is emphasised, access will be granted to any documents that require review. Documents such as reports, minutes of meetings etc. will be very useful in triangulating other sources of data.

**(b) Archival Records**

Although this type of record may vary from case study to case study, as would therefore their relevance to the study in question (Yin 1994: p83), archival records available in this study are likely to form an important source of data. Much of the work in recent years has been documented for the purposes of compulsory competitive tendering, and documents have been produced which carefully specify activity and resources of sport and recreation facilities (Day et al. 1998). Documents available are therefore likely to be: (a) compulsory competitive tendering documentation, (b) external verification documentation (e.g. iso 9002 standards and processes), and (c) other internal planning and strategy documentation (e.g. marketing planning documents and service quality standards statements). These documents will also form an important aspect in triangulation with other data sources.

**(c) Interviews**

It has been established earlier in this chapter that the use of a mixed methods approach may enhance research findings. The use of the interview can allow more in

depth data to emerge (Yin 1994). With regard to triangulation, interviews are seen as an important source of data for the purposes of validity of the dimensional constructs of market orientation and service quality for this study.

#### Advantages of the Interview Method

There is a large range of techniques available under the heading of “qualitative research”. The interview method was chosen as appropriate within this study for a number of reasons given as follows:

1. The increased response rate of interviews (Oppenheim 1992) in comparison to open ended surveys makes the former method better for targeting (Yin 1994). The increased confidence concerning response rates allows the researcher to choose a purposive sample. The managers selected for interview are more likely to accept to participate within the study, which was found to be the case with 100% of managers participating in the study.
2. Via an interview, the researcher can introduce himself, and the respondent to the subject establish rapport and trust particularly for situations that may be considered confidential or sensitive. In this research project, the previous era of compulsory competitive tendering and the political nature of the environment made this aspect of interviewing technique particularly important.
3. The interview can be more insightful than other methods, and “provides perceived causal inferences” (Yin 1994: p80) from the respondent’s rather than the researcher’s viewpoint. Interviews can therefore allow the emergence of important themes that may not emerge from a more structured format (Oppenheim 1992).
4. Interviews may also allow the researcher to develop a sense of time and history rather than providing a series of static responses which may be the outcome of a survey. They may therefore allow the researcher to put responses or results of a quantitative survey into context rather than providing a snapshot picture (Moser and Kalton 1971; Seidman 1991; Yin 1994).

In conjunction therefore with the other methods adopted in this study, the interview method has a large number of strengths which can therefore enhance the rigour of this study.

### Disadvantages of the Interview Method

As with all research methods, the interview has a number of potential weaknesses that firstly need to be identified, and secondly need to be addressed during the interview phase. These are identified as follows:

1. Interviews are more time consuming than questionnaire surveys, particularly if the researcher has to travel to interview respondents.
2. Interviewers may add bias as a result of verbal and non-verbal reactions, and an inappropriate choice of probes.
3. Inappropriate coding of interview may result in biased results.
4. The quality of the data is dependant upon the interviewee, who are themselves subject to problems of recall, misperception and incorrect knowledge (Yin 1994).

Therefore, as with all research methods, the strengths need to be appropriately consolidated and the weaknesses eliminated as far as is possible. Therefore, the use of appropriate questions, minimal body language, and validation of the coding after the event to minimise this possible bias are necessary. In terms of reliability of interviewees, this can only be done on an individual basis by the interviewer, but the selection of key managerial staff should present suitable candidates with appropriate knowledge and ability to express their views with regard to this research study.

#### **(d) Reliability and Validity of the Interview Method**

The reliability of the interview method rests upon the effectiveness of the transcription of the interviews. To enable the best possible level of reliability, with the respondents permission, the interviews should be tape recorded and transcribed so that they can be analysed in detail afterwards (Oppenheim 1992).

Validity however is more difficult to establish, particularly as the transcriptions are used as a tool for interpreting the interview rather than as an analysis in themselves (Kvale 1996). A number of issues need to be established therefore to enable good validity within interviews, these are as follows:

1. Has the question been interpreted correctly? The issues of market orientation and service quality may have differing meanings dependent upon the respondents experience and qualifications. The responses however, compared against established literature and consensus will highlight if the question has been misunderstood or if the respondents understanding of the subject is different.
2. Is the respondent able to verbalise his or her thoughts adequately? The purposive sample of chief officers and managers of local authorities are adept at reporting issues on a wide range of issues.
3. Is the respondents' view time sensitive, i.e. does it apply to that point in time only or does it apply to a longer time frame. One of the strengths of the interview method is the ability to identify this particular aspect via the responses of the interviewee.

In addition to these, Dean and Whyte (1978) identified four major factors that the interviewer needs to take into account before an interview, these were:

1. Does the respondent have any motives that may influence his responses? This aspect is potentially overcome by emphasising the "confidential" nature of the interview.
2. The presence of barriers to spontaneity, where the respondent does not mention matters that may present them in a negative light. The emphasis of the above technique of "confidentiality" should be an adequate mechanism to overcome this concern.
3. Will the respondent attempt to "say what the interviewer wants to hear". The subject matter of the interview tends to be technical in its content, and other sources of data are to be used in an attempt to triangulate interviewer data.
4. Are there any idiosyncratic features that may affect a response? Much of the content of the interview questions will be discussed in terms of policies and procedures of the local authority, which will enable the researcher to gauge either the short or long term effect of the issue in question.

Therefore, emphasising the aspects of confidentiality and to structure the interview will enhance the validity of an interview (Dean and Whyte 1978). This is important



because it is inappropriate for a researcher to assume that responses and behaviour are related. This approach will allow a better, more reasoned evaluation as to what is a valid response and what is not.

**(e) Themes within an Interview**

The interviews were initiated with a discussion intended to put the respondent at ease. This was normally about the current local situation about the weather, which was either raining, cloudy or sunny, or some combination of the three. Permission was sought from all respondents with regard to tape recording of the interviews, which in all cases was granted with an attitude as a “matter of course”. Emphasis was given with regard to confidentiality which was considered important by all respondents.

Once the respondent was at ease, and the tape recording equipment was set up, the interview was begun. Two major themes were predetermined and included, these were:

- Market orientation
- Service Quality

These themes were covered using an interview schedule listed on table 13. The nature of the respondents and the type of questions allowed other issues and themes to emerge. The interviews took between forty five minutes and one and a half hours to complete. In all cases there were no other individuals present other than the interviewees and the researcher.

**6.5.3 Quantitative Phase of Stage 2: Analytical Approach**

The modified questionnaires of the market orientation and service quality (modified MARKOR and SERVPERF described later in this thesis), provide data upon which

three analytical techniques can be used for the purposes of this study. These are Cronbach Alpha tests, factor analysis, and multivariate analysis of variance (Scheffe's test).

**(a) Cronbach Alpha Tests on Resultant Dimensional Grouping.**

Reliability, as stated previously refers to patterns of high inter-correlations among the elements in a scale which indicates that they constitute a coherent whole in measuring a concept. An important measure of reliability is the Cronbach Alpha test, in this study across market orientation and service quality anticipated dimensions. This internal consistency reliability test determines the coefficients of all possible split halves of the observations under study. This method has been used more extensively in recent years for market orientation (Caruana et al. 1999; Deng and Dart 1994; Deshpande et al. 1993; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Kohli et al. 1993; Narver and Slater 1990) and for services marketing (Babakus and Boller 1992; Babakus and Mangold 1992; Bowers et al. 1994; Carman 1990; Cronin and Taylor 1992; Finn and Lamb 1991; Headley and Miller 1993; Lytle and Mokwa 1992; McAlexander et al. 1994; O'Connor et al. 1994; Taylor and Cronin 1994). Its value ranges from 0 to 1. Values of less than 0.6 are normally considered unsatisfactory (Nunnally 1978) which all of the above studies achieves, except Finn and Lamb (1991) on this measurement criteria.

In this study an iterative method was adopted to eliminating elements from each dimensional grouping of elements for each the market orientation and service quality constructs. The criteria for the elements removal was determined if the overall Cronbach alpha scores of the selected dimensional component could be raised by the

elimination of that individual element. This method has been identified as an appropriate method for this type of study for improving the reliability of the group of responses (Farrell and Oczkowski 1998). For the market orientation questions, three dimensions were anticipated. For each of the three dimensions, elements were removed to produce the maximum score above the minimum Cronbach alpha score for the group. For the service quality questions, the same procedure was adopted.

**(b) Principal Component Analysis**

This technique was first devised by Spearman in 1904 as factor analysis, and is now one of a generic name given to a class of multivariate statistical methods whose primary purpose is to define the underlying structure in a data matrix (Hair et al. 1998). There are many variants of this process, but this one of the most commonly used, which produces real factors rather than theoretical ones (Kline 1994).

The purpose of this analytical technique is to determine whether underlying traits or groupings exist for the constructs of market orientation and service quality. Other studies have already determined that dimensional components exist for these constructs in other industries, but this study seeks to attempt to find if they exist for sport and recreation studies. Both instruments of market orientation and service quality in previous studies have used factor analysis which has been shown to be appropriate as a data reduction technique.

In this study principal components analysis was used to determine the underlying constructs, if they existed within the data set after reduction of elements via the iterative removal using the Cronbach alpha tests. Factor solutions were only retained

if they possessed an eigenvalue greater than 1 (Nunnally 1978; Kaiser 1958). Within each of the principal components analysis, the Varimax rotation method was adopted. This was consistent with both the market orientation and service quality studies in this area, discussed previously in this thesis.

#### **(c) Multivariate Analysis of Variance**

This technique is the multivariate extension of the univariate techniques for assessing the differences between group means (Hair et al. 1998). Univariate tests such as *t*-tests are not appropriate for such multiple tests because of the increased risk of finding correlations due to error. In this study, the dimensional constructs that were created from the factor analysis were tested against each local authority to determine if any significant differences could be found. Where this has occurred it has been stated in the analysis. For the purposes of comparison however, the mean of each local authority has been used for each of the dimensional constructs identified using the Scheffe's test of comparison (Hair et al. 1998) against the direct measurements of income.

#### **(d) Validity Measures for the MARKOR and SERVPERF constructs**

Validity evaluates the degree to which a number of different methods of measurement agree on a particular construct. Headings under this criteria include: construct validity, discriminant validity, face validity, concurrent validity and convergent validity. The construct validity measure relates to the extent that a scale measures what it is purported to measure. In this study, the use of factor analysis, the interviews, and review of documentation provide sufficient construct validity measurements for both MARKOR and SERVPERF measurement instruments. The

discriminant validity measure refers to the extent that a measure is novel, and does not simply reflect the measure of another variable. Again, the results of the two instruments of MARKOR and SERVPERF after being subject to factor analysis and multiple analysis of variance significance tests, combined with the interview data and document review provides a suitable discriminant validity check. The face validity test is a subjective criterion and is a reflection of the extent to which the scale items are meaningful and appear to represent the construct being measured. Questionnaires were pilot tested to establish that the wording was appropriate for the industry under study. Other face validity tests were conducted with regard to the ability of the respondents to answer the questions within the quantitative research instrument. For each question, an additional code was added labelled "don't know", which allowed respondents an option should they not be able to answer that item. This was added since all staff were to be asked to complete the questionnaire.

The concurrent validity test refers to the extent in which the scale items being tested are associated as hypothesised with conceptually related measures (Peter et al. 1993). Initially this was established with regard to the study by Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994), and indirectly by other studies using the SERVQUAL model (Babakus and Boller 1992; Carman 1990; Teas 1993). The factor analysis results of this study are detailed and discussed later in this thesis.

#### **6.5.4 Qualitative Phase of Stage 2: Analytical Approach**

The themes which have been identified from the interviews have been dimensionally grouped according to the major constructs of market orientation and service quality.

The nature however of this rich data source also provides other dimensions which impinge upon the study. Where appropriate these have been correlated with the quantitative elements of this study.

#### **6.5.5 Reflections on the Data Sources**

Although the best attempts at rigour can be applied to any research programme, the strengths and weaknesses of the approach need to be evaluated to determine whether any bias could have been inadvertently introduced during the process. The items considered under this heading are therefore the AHP questionnaires, the market orientation/service quality questionnaires, the interviews, and the other sources of evidence viewed at each of the local authorities.

### **6.6 Summary**

This chapter has described the qualitative and quantitative research design and methodology adopted for this study. The initial difficulty is to identify cases which show marketing as important against a background of authorities where research has indicated that this activity is important, but that not all local authorities have adopted this. Importance as a measure is only useful provided it can be shown to be internally reliable. Although there are a number of means to identify this, the Analytic Hierarchy Process would appear to be a pragmatically useful means to achieve this and satisfy the reliability criteria.

Although market orientation and service quality as defined by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) respectively, have been measured in other industries, both of the measurement instruments have not been applied specifically to this sector. In addition to this there are perhaps other impacting dimensions which

apply which lie outside of the very constrained limits that these quantitative measurement methods provide.

For this reason a qualitative stage will also be introduced to allow triangulation against the quantitative data to provide: firstly, a form of measurement validity and, secondly, to use qualitative analytical techniques to determine if significant emergent issues arise outside of the defined constructs of market orientation and service quality. Next are the details and evaluation of the research methods adopted for this study.

## **Chapter 7 RESEARCH METHODS**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This Chapter discusses the research methods adopted in this study as identified in chapter 6, and the various stages of this study. Presented are the measurement instruments that are used and also the methods of analysis adopted. It begins by outlining the use of the Analytic Hierarchy Process model that was used to identify the four cases, its structure and underlying foundations. The development of the quantitative and qualitative stages are then discussed, incorporating the validity and reliability issues of the research approach.

### **7.2 Stage 1: The AHP Multicriterion Model**

The AHP questionnaire model was developed from the literature review. This was piloted via two Chief Officers of local authority sport and recreation organisations, and was redesigned in terms of layout and some wording of the questions.

In the United Kingdom, there are 534 local authorities providing sport and recreation in the form of built facilities. It was determined that four cases would be selected as a suitable number to evaluate as part of this research programme. It could not be determined however by any form of quantitative measurement of the number of responses that would fall within the acceptable range of inconsistency measurement of 0.2 (i.e. 0.2 or less).

This value of inconsistency may not suggest that a local authority is good or not at employing the principles of marketing and other related criteria, merely that decisions



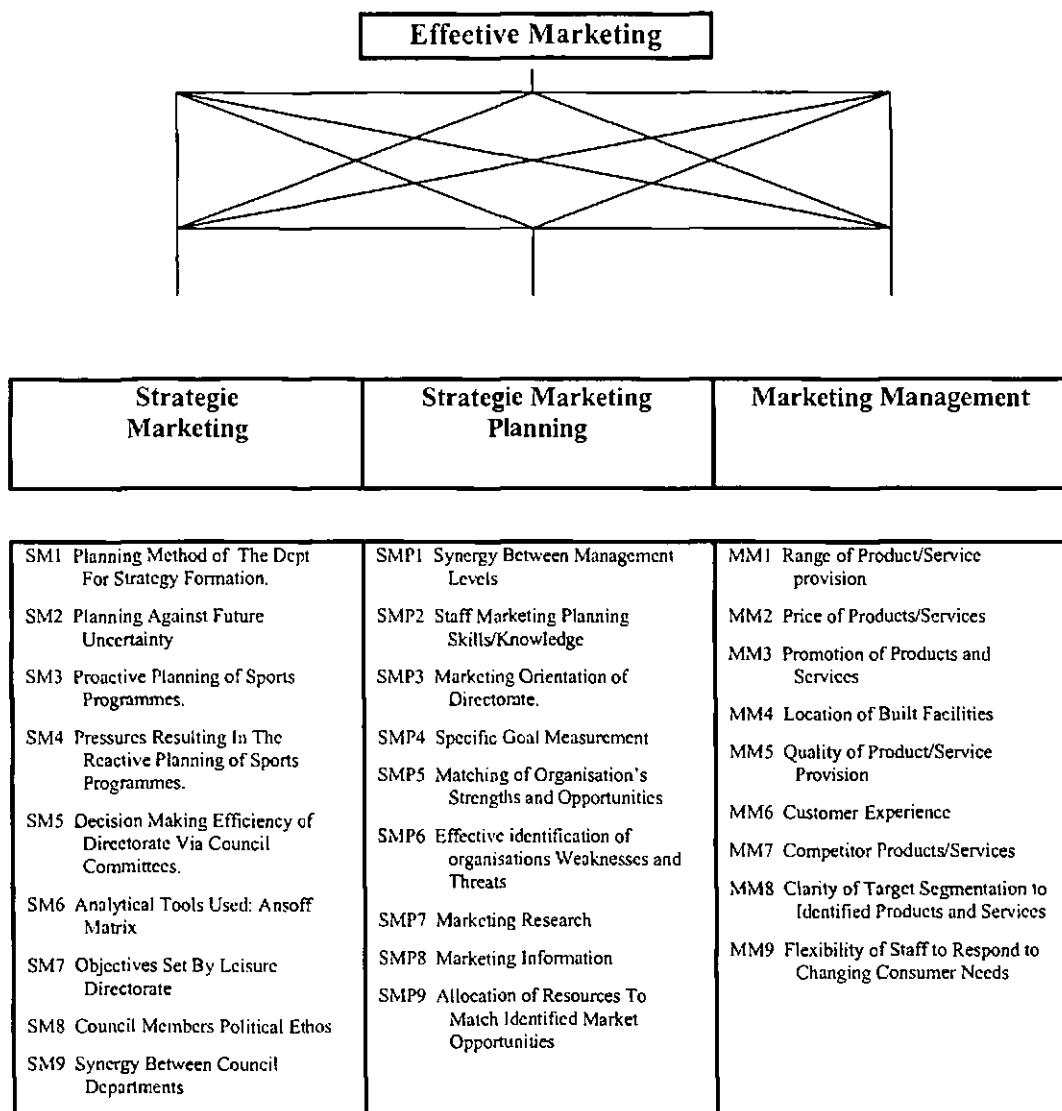
in terms of conflict of the various elements chosen in the model were not in excessive conflict. The means by which the AHP inconsistency measure is obtained and calculated i.e. comparison of all elements in a dual approach, also provides an internally reliable measurement. This therefore provides that each individual response is reliable and usable responses can be used for comparative purposes against each other with regard to the AHP model which has been developed for this study.

The priorities that arise as a result of the AHP's model's calculations of each of the elements selected, by the respondents give the value of where they place the elements of marketing and service quality. It is therefore the combination of the inconsistency measurement and the highest priority of marketing and service quality where possible that gives a suitable cases that can be selected.

### **7.2.1 Model Structure**

The model therefore essentially breaks down into three levels, of which two are evaluative.

The first level is that of the overall Effectiveness of Marketing Goal. The second level is composed of three major groupings of strategic marketing, strategic marketing planning and marketing management. The third level comprises the nine appropriate elements under each relative heading.



**Table 6** Diagrammatic representation of the AHP model for “Effective Marketing”.

### 7.2.2 AHP Model Structure for Sport and Recreation Providers

This primary goal of “overall marketing effectiveness” was determined in the literature review as being a common requirement within many organisations. Contemporary literature also divided marketing techniques into three major divisions, strategic marketing, strategic marketing planning and marketing management (Jain 1993). The last of these three was perhaps the first to evolve clearly as a grouping of

techniques (Kotler et al. 1996; Baker 1996), the prior two developing later. The elements drawn from the literature for the questionnaire, with a brief justification are given. The literature review provides for the model to be initially divided into three main sections, strategic marketing, strategic marketing planning and marketing management. Collective wisdom suggests that academics in general do not seem to be able to agree on generic headings such as these. Therefore although these groupings were not conclusive, the literature did provide some commonality, and specific elements under each. These are therefore listed in the following sections under the major headings of Strategic Marketing, Strategic Marketing Planning and Marketing Management.

Elements of Strategic Marketing	Description
SM1 Planning Method of The Department For Strategy Formation.	This refers to the effect of the system of planning of the department to develop the appropriate strategy to effectively provide products and services of the department. Initially this was divided into a number of related elements concerning planning, but due to the cognisance limit of nine elements, they were combined under this one title. Support for this element is drawn from McDonald (1996), and Ansoff (1994).
SM2 Planning Against Future Uncertainty	This activity is intended to overcome future problems due to uncertainty and is drawn from the work of Hussey (1979)
SM3 Proactive Planning of Sports Programmes.	This method, as an head office activity, creates change rather than waits to react. Brooksbank (1991), Hooley and Jobber (1986), Ansoff (1977), Saunders and Wong (1985), Karger and Malik (1975) and Baker et al. (1986).
SM4 Pressures Resulting In The Reactive Planning of Sports Programmes.	As an head office activity, respondents react rather than make changes. Its occurrence often depends upon the number of customers (Kotler et al. 1997) or the nature of the decision making of management due to the conditions in which the organisation finds itself. (Dibb et al. 1994). The conditions under which the public sector management operates often have limited resources. Management may therefore be forced to choose between this reactive and a proactive planning style.
SM5 Decision Making Efficiency of Directorate Via Council Committees.	This refers to the perceived efficiency in the decision making for the department via the various Council Committees. This component is drawn from Jain (1994) and is based on the premise that strategic marketing decisions require inputs from the three corporate aspects, corporate culture, corporate publics and corporate resources. Peattie and Notley (1989) view of "departmental interfaces" affecting communications and efficiency, and Ames (1968) finding, supported by Wind (1981), of the need for co-operation between departments, all combined, result in a perceived "efficiency" of the decision making of the organisation.
SM6 Analytical Tools Used: Ansoff Matrix	This, one of the earliest strategic tools to be developed (1969) is quoted extensively in the literature. A basic tool which may or may not be used by public sector sport and recreation providers.
SM7 Objectives Set By Leisure Directorate	These are the operational objectives of the department determined by head office. Brooksbank (1991) cites objective setting as important in successful organisations, as do leading authors on marketing related subjects (for example Kotler et al. 1997, Dibb et al. 1994, McCarthy and Perreault 1993, Wilson et al. 1992).
SM8 Council Members Political Ethos	The cultural effect of the decision-makers on the organisation can positively assist, or be detrimental to the organisation. The nature of public sector, the political complexion of the council, will have an effect on the delivery of the services. A high rating of this element is unlikely to be beneficial to the effective delivery of services due to the complexity of the democratic process, and the operational needs of commercial organisation. The nature of public sector warrants this component to be separately identified, McDonald (1996) identifies cultural and political factors that are significant barriers to strategic marketing and strategic marketing planning. Kotler et al. (1996) implies the importance of top management with regard to successful service providing companies.
SM9 Synergy Between Council Departments	This refers to the other departments of the Council, and whether they "get on" with this department. The nature of local government, although the sport and recreation providers operate on a commercial basis, such activity requires financial support. This therefore places this type of operation in a competitive situation with regard to resources. Peattie and Notley (1989) identified interface problems, and Jain (1993) specified synergy between different components of an organisation. Thus, due to the nature of local government, (chapter 3), this concept is divided into two areas, that outside of, and that within the department. The latter is itemised under strategic marketing planning.

Table 7 Elements of Strategic Marketing

Elements of Strategic Marketing Planning	Description
SMP1 Synergy Between Management Levels	This refers to the “do the managers between each level get on with each other” factor. McDonald (1996) specifies difficulties of large organisations to consolidate inputs to a global marketing plan, whilst Zikmund and D’Amico (1996) discuss the strategic marketing process which involves a “comprehensive framework” which leads to involvement of all relevant aspects of an organisation.
SMP2 Staff Marketing Planning Skills/Knowledge	This refers to the ability of staff to have the available skill and knowledge of marketing planning techniques to the advantage of the department. McDonald (1985, 1989, 1993, and 1996 ), identifies this as one of a number of items significant to the development of marketing planning related processes.
SMP3 Marketing Orientation of Directorate.	This is the perception of the respondents’ view with regard to marketing orientation of the head office in terms of their approach to the operations of the department
SMP4 Specific Goal Measurement	This refers to the clarity of the products and services provided, and how their use is measured. McDonald (1989, 1993, and 1996 ) cites this as part of the marketing planning process, as does Zikmund and D’Amico (1996) . This is also implied by Dibb and Simkin (1993 and Day (1984), as an important strategic marketing planning component.
SMP5 Matching of Organisation's Strengths and Opportunities	To gain and maintain the best advantage, the matching of organisational strengths against the available opportunities. This is identified by McDonald (1989, 1993, and 1996 ), Hooley and Lynch (1985), and is discussed by a significant number of authors. It is included, despite the criticisms, (Hill and Westbrook 1997), due to its extensive awareness. It is separated however into two components, strengths/opportunities and weaknesses/threats. The AHP model allows the priority of each to be evaluated, and consequently an implied measure is possible.
SMP6 Effective identification of organisations Weaknesses and Threats	Avoiding the pitfalls of weaknesses of the organisation and the outside threats which might cause detriment or prevent product/service operation or take up. Please see the previous paragraph for support of this component of the model.
SMP7 Marketing Research	The use of marketing research focuses the organisation towards its intended customer targets. McDonald’s work (1989, 1993, and 1996) specifically identifies this as an important strategic marketing planning stage. It is also implied by Dibb and Simkin (1993), as important.
SMP8 Marketing Information	Information about customers is essential for a marketing orientation. This type of information comes from computerised ticket sales systems and gives valuable indications of customer usage trends. McDonald (1996) cites this alongside marketing research as an important contemporary component in the strategic marketing process.
SMP9 Allocation of Resources To Match Identified Market Opportunities.	As well as finance, the deployment of staff and all other items that would be considered “resources”.

Table 8 Elements of Strategic Marketing Planning

Elements of Marketing Management	Description
MM1 Range of Product/Service provision	This is the individual product or service that the customer buys. e.g. swim, squash. Begun by Borden (1964), and further refined by McCarthy (1978) this concept along with the other controllables is extensively described in the literature.
MM2 Price of Products/Services	This is the actual price of the individual product or service purchased. It does not include the moneys paid by individuals in rates. For source, please see MM1.
MM3 Promotion of Products and Services	This includes the advertising, leafleting and all other methods of communication of the products and services provided. For source, please see MM1.
MM4 Location of Built Facilities	This refers to the geographical situation of the built facilities in relation to the intended target groups for whom the products and services are provided. For source, please see MM1.
MM5 Quality of Product/Service Provision	This refers to the quality of products and services, and the facilities in which they are provided. Piercy (1995) and Parasuraman et al. (1993) view this as an important aspect in the process of marketing.
MM6 Customer Experience	This is an indirect measure of the emphasis the organisation and its staff places upon customers, for example in dealing with customer complaints. Identified by a significant number of authors, this component is dealt with under chapter 1, page 9 onwards and is refined in this model by aspects of service marketing provision considered by Parasuraman et al. (1993).
MM7 Competitor Products/Services	This refers to the provision of products and services, and the level of consideration given to competitors that may take customers away. Identified by a number of authors when using generic analysis tools such as SWOT, Kotler et al. (1996: p52) for example cites this as one of the methods that companies use to monitor performance, particularly services.
MM8 Clarity of Target Segmentation to Identified Products and Services	This refers to how the department defines its customers in terms of identifiable characteristics e.g. age, employment. This concept, now well embedded within marketing theory is discussed by a considerable number of authors, (for example Kotler et al. 1997, Dibb et al. 1994, McCarthy and Perreault 1993, Wilson et al. 1992, Saunders and Wong 1985).
MM9 Flexibility of Staff to Respond to Changing Consumer Needs	This refers to the ability of the department to reorganise its resources to adapt to changes required by changes in consumer demands. Considered important under services marketing criteria (Brooksbank 1990) and Barnes et al. (1994) with regard to beneficial changes that were occurring within public sector management

**Table 9 Elements of Marketing Management**

### **7.2.3 Sample Selection for Stage 1.**

This study is based upon multiple objectives, and is not seeking, in this stage a single value or measurement. In addition to this, a variety of statistical parameters of the UK public sector sport and recreation providers are unknown, which are required under

normal circumstances to determine an adequate sample size. These include the population variance and standard error. No previous studies have been conducted either which could indicate a suitable value. Any statistical calculation would have therefore been influenced by estimated values for the necessary parameters needed to generate a sample size value.

Each returned reply to the AHP questionnaire however produces the internally reliable inconsistency index value (Saaty 1995). As the purpose of this stage was to identify four suitable cases, and each return could be determined as reliable or not based upon the inconsistency index value.

Previously determined in the literature review, the presence of marketing as an activity was not uniform across all local authorities (Cousins 1990; Collins and Glyptis 1992; Booth 1993; Graham 1994; Kester and Barns 1994; Walsh 1994; Dibb 1995; Doherty, Saker and Smith 1996, 1998; Day et al. 1998; Rees 1998; Wakefield and Bush 1998; Novatorov and Crompton 2001). Therefore a random sample of 20% was used of 534 local authority leisure and recreation departments in the UK (106). The selection of the local authorities was via random number allocation. An estimate of a 50% return was expected. This is a higher response than usual for postal questionnaires since all potential respondents prior to posting the questionnaires were telephoned. This provided a 10:1 ratio of the numbers posted compared to the required number of four cases to be selected for further study. Should there be insufficient suitable cases that fulfil the criteria for selection in this round, then a further mailing of local authorities would have been conducted.

Of the original 106 potential respondents, 46 replies were returned representing a response rate of 58% of those agreeing to participate. This identified four cases from the total responses received that placed marketing on the highest priority in comparison to the other constructs being measured and had inconsistency values within the given limits.

### **7.3 Stage 2a: Questionnaire Design (Quantitative Elements).**

The quantitative aspect of this study was drawn from the market orientation studies (Kohli and Jaworski 1990, 1993) and studies of service quality measurement via SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994) described earlier in this thesis.

#### **7.3.1 General Considerations of the Questionnaire Development**

The design of the measurement instrument was modified to eliminate items which could be problematic due to questionnaire design and thereby inducing respondent error. The numeric choices in the original questionnaires were horizontally arranged. This may encourage a respondent to reply “in columns”, and not provide accurate data (Churchill 1999). The questionnaire was therefore designed so that the numeric choices were vertically placed for each question. To eliminate excessive length in terms of paper, a triple column format was adopted. Pilot studies indicated that this layout was satisfactory and encouraged the respondent to read each question more carefully. The resultant questionnaire was five pages in length.

The questionnaire asked the respondent staff to give their evaluation in terms of performance, particularly for the service elements of the questionnaire. Respondents may have considered this as a “review of their personal behaviour” which could have positively biased some responses. A “third party technique” was therefore adopted to



“reduce falsehoods” (McDaniel and Gates 1996: p204; Burns and Bush 1995) and each respondent was instructed to consider their views of “others” of the centre and not themselves.

### **7.3.2 Questionnaire Development: Market Orientation Construct**

It is appropriate however to review some of the original model scale development methods, as well as some of the appropriate integrated studies to determine the current consensus with regard to scale development, and as a consequence the most appropriate scale and model to be used for this study.

Despite the apparent support for the success of the market orientation studies, not all subsequent work which has attempted to replicate the earlier studies in differing industry scenarios has been successful. The 21 item market orientation measure developed by Narver and Slater (1990) was evaluated by Sigaw and Diamantopoulos (1994) using confirmatory factor analysis. In this instance, the model's fit across all of the elements was not found to be satisfactory. Sigaw and Diamantopoulos (1994) also noted that unlike the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model, factor analysis had not been used in the original scale development. Exploratory factor analysis was further used to consider the dimensionality of the model. Five factors were extracted, the first accounted for some 31% of variance, which was more than the remaining four factors together. Cross loading and other difficulties led Sigaw and Diamantopoulos (1994) to conclude that: “...the veracity of the scale becomes questionable”. Kohli et al. (1993) were also critical of the Narver and Slater (1990) model on the grounds of: (1) adopts a focused view of markets by emphasising customers and competition as compared with a view that focuses upon these two as stakeholders and additional factors that drive customer needs and expectation e.g. technology, regulation. (2) does not tap the

speed with which market intelligence is generated and disseminated within an organisation, and (3) includes a number of items that do not tap specific activities and behaviours that represent a market orientation.

The Kohli and Jaworski (1990) research tool, supported by the reliability and validity considerations discussed in the previous chapter, was selected as the more appropriate measurement instrument for the construct of market orientation. Further to this, the Kohli et al. (1993) study resulted in a 20 item scale from the original 32 items. This is known as the MARKOR scale shown on table 10.

#### Intelligence Generation

1. In this business unit, we meet with customers at least once a year to find out what products or services they will need in the future.
2. \*Individuals from our manufacturing department interact directly with customers to learn how to serve them better.
3. In this business unit, we do a lot of in-house market research.
4. We are slow to detect changes in our customers' product preferences. (R)
5. We poll end users at least once a year to assess the quality of our products and services.
6. \*We often talk with or survey those who can influence our end users' purchases (e.g. retailers, distributors).\*
7. \*We collect industry information by informal means (e.g. lunch with industry friends, talks with trade partners).
8. \*In our business unit, intelligence on our competitors is generated independently by several departments.
9. We are slow to detect fundamental shifts in our industry (e.g., competition, technology, regulation). (R)\*
10. We periodically review the likely effect of changes in our business environment (e.g., regulation) on customers.\*

#### Intelligence Dissemination

1. \*A lot of informal "hall talk" in this business unit concerns our competitors' tactics or strategies.\*
2. We have interdepartmental meetings at least once a quarter to discuss market trends and developments.\*
3. Marketing personnel in our business unit spend time discussing customers' future needs with other functional departments.
4. \*Our business unit periodically circulates documents (e.g., reports, news-letters) that provide information on our customers.\*
5. When something important happens to a major customer of the market, the whole business unit knows about it within a short period.\*
6. Data on customer satisfaction are disseminated at all levels in this business unit on a regular basis.
7. \*There is minimal communication between marketing and manufacturing departments concerning market developments. (R)
8. When one department finds out something important about competitors, it is slow to alert other departments. (R)\*

#### Responsiveness

1. It takes us forever to decide how to respond to our competitor's price changes.
2. \*Principles of market segmentation drive new product development efforts in this business unit.
3. For one reason or another we tend to ignore changes in our customers' product or service needs. (R)
4. We periodically review our product development efforts to ensure that they are in line with what customers want.
5. \*Our business plans are driven more by technological advances than by market research. (R)
6. Several departments get together periodically to plan a response to changes taking place in our business environment.
7. \*The product lines we sell depend more on internal politics than real market needs. (R)\*
8. If a major competitor were to launch an intensive campaign targeted at our customers, we would implement a response immediately
9. The activities of the different departments in this business unit are well co-ordinated. \*
10. Customer complaints fall on deaf ears in this business unit. (R)\*
11. Even if we came up with a great marketing plan, we probably would not be able to implement it in a timely fashion. (R)\*
12. \*We are quick to respond to significant changes in our competitors' pricing structures.\*
13. \*When we find out that customers are unhappy with the quality of our service, we take corrective action immediately.\*
14. When we find that customers would like us to modify a product or service, the departments involved make concerted efforts to do so.

**Table 10 MARKOR scale items, Market Orientation Scale (Kohli et al. 1993)**

(R) denotes reverse coded item.

\* At end of question, refers to addition of item during or after completion of the second pre-test.

\*In front of question, denotes this item eliminated from final MARKOR set of questions

The 20 item scale was produced as a result of both statistical inference and pragmatic reasons. This later aspect reduced the number of scale items due to the length of the questionnaire. Anonymous reviewers to the Kohli et al. (1993) study suggested that fewer scale items would reduce non response by interviewees. Although these items were removed (original questions are still presented in table 10), their deletion was independent of reliability/validity considerations, and future studies could reintroduce them if appropriate (Kohli et al. 1993). The earlier studies also used a five item scale for each of the questions. This was changed in later studies to seven items (Caruana et al. 1999) as this was shown to increase the reliability of the instrument (Churchill and Peter 1984) and has no effect in a factor analysis (Barnes et al. 1994). The questionnaire was amended to fit better the public sector sport and recreation environment.

#### **(a) Itemised Questionnaire Amendments: Market Orientation**

##### **Construct**

###### General

Business units are normally referred to as “departments”, this has therefore been changed. References to manufacturing sections are inappropriate for this questionnaire and were replaced with “centre” meaning the facility providing the sport and recreation service.

###### Intelligence Generation

Question 1 of the original instrument asked if the business unit met once a year with customers. Of all the questions, this one is perhaps the most ill suited to the type of response scale used (1 to 7) because it is dichotomous i.e. either the business unit does or does not meet once a year. It is however covered by the combination of question 5

which asks that the business unit polls customers at least once a year to assess the quality of products and services, and question 3, concerning in house market research. Question 1 of the original instrument was therefore amended.

Question 2 referred to a “manufacturing department”. This is also inappropriate and was therefore amended to “centre”, since a service is consumed at its point of production and the facilities are the means by which much of the service is provided.

#### Intelligence Dissemination

Question 7 This refers to the marketing function and its relation to manufacturing departments. The wording has been amended to better represent the relation between marketing and the sport and recreation centres.

#### Responsiveness

All questions in this section were retained, but some were modified to suit the contextual situation of the sport and recreation departments.

The questions used in the Market Orientation section of the questionnaire were therefore as follows:

- IG1 In this department, we meet with customers regularly to find out what products or services they will need in the future.
- IG 2 Individuals from our development unit interact directly with customers to learn how to serve them better.
- IG 3 In this department, we do a lot of market research.
- IG 4 We are slow to detect changes in our customers' product preferences.
- IG 5 We poll end users at least once a year to assess the quality of our products and services.
- IG 6 We often talk with or survey those who can influence our end users' purchases. (e.g. local groups, community activity information centres).
- IG 7 We collect industry information by informal means (e.g., lunch with industry friends, talks with trade partners).
- IG 8 In our department, intelligence on our competitors is generated independently by several departments.
- IG 9 We are slow to detect fundamental shifts in our industry (e.g., competition, technology, regulation).
- IG 10 We periodically review the likely effect of changes in our business environment (e.g., regulation) on customers.
- ID1 A lot of informal "hall talk" in this centre concerns our competitors' tactics or strategies.
- ID 2 We have interdepartmental meetings at least once a quarter to discuss market trends and developments.
- ID 3 Marketing personnel in our business unit spend time discussing customers' future needs with other functional departments.
- ID 4 Our department periodically circulates documents (e.g., reports, news-letters) that provide information on our customers.
- ID 5 When something important happens to a major customer of the market, the whole department knows about it within a short period.
- ID 6 Data on customer satisfaction are disseminated at all levels in this business unit on a regular basis.
- ID 7 There is minimal communication between marketing and central departments concerning market developments.
- ID 8 When one department finds out something important about competitors, it is slow to alert other departments.
- R1 It takes us forever to decide how to respond to our competitor's price changes.
- R2 Principles of market segmentation drive new product development efforts in this business unit.
- R3 For one reason or another we tend to ignore changes in our customer's product or service needs.
- R4 We periodically review our product development efforts to ensure that they are in line with what customers want.
- R5 Our business plans are driven more by technological advances than by market research.
- R6 Several departments get together periodically to plan a response to changes taking place in our business environment.
- R7 The product lines we sell depends more on internal politics than real market needs.
- R8 If a major competitor were to launch an intensive campaign targeted at our customers, we would implement a response immediately
- R9 The activities of the different departments in this business unit are well co-ordinated.
- R10 Customer complaints fall on deaf ears in this department.
- R11 Even if we came up with a great marketing plan, we probably would not be able to implement it in a timely fashion.
- R12 We are quick to respond to significant changes in our competitors' pricing structures.
- R13 When we find out that customers are unhappy with the quality of our service, we take corrective action immediately.
- R14 When we find that customers would like us to modify a product or service, the departments involved make concerted efforts to do so.

The references IG, ID and R refer to intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination and responsiveness respectively.

### **7.3.3 Questionnaire Development: Service Quality Construct**

The extensive use and study cannot be overlooked with regard to the use of SERVQUAL as a measuring instrument for service quality. Studies in this industry area however indicate that this model does not produce a good fit (Williams 1998). Cronin and Taylor's (1992, 1994) model of SERVPERF however has not been tested in the industry area of this study, and has provided better results when tested in other studies than SERVQUAL by explaining more of the variance in measurement and better reliability measures.

#### **(a) Itemised Questionnaire Amendments: Service Quality Construct**

Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) did however suggest that the questions could be contextually affected and therefore may need to be amended. The SERVPERF measure was therefore adopted for use within this study. The questions from the original SERVPERF instrument were amended as follows: q11, q15, q18, q19, q20, q21.

Questions 11, 15, 18 and 21 were amended to allow employees give a customer viewpoint. The original instrument was completed by customers, this is being completed by staff and required changing appropriately. The personalised "customer viewpoint" questions in the original instrument referred to the customers as "you". This was also amended in questions 19 and 20. Finally, question 20 in the original instrument stated: "...convenient to all their customers". The response to this question with the word "all" can only be dichotomous, since the opening hours could not be

convenient to at least one customer. This part of question 22 was therefore amended to: "...convenient to their customers". The resultant 22 questions of the service quality section of this instrument was therefore as follows;

Q1	This centre generally has up to date equipment.
Q2	This centre's physical facilities are visually appealing.
Q3	This centre's staff are well dressed and appear neat.
Q4	The appearance of the physical facilities of this centre is in keeping with the type of service provided.
Q5	When this centre promises to do something by a certain time, it does so.
Q6	When there are problems for the customer, this centre is sympathetic and reassuring.
Q7	This centre is dependable.
Q8	This centre provides the services at the time it promises to do so.
Q9	This centre keeps its records accurately.
Q10	This centre does not tell its customers exactly when services will be performed.
Q11	The employees of the centre do not provide a prompt service.
Q12	Employees of this centre are not always willing to help customers.
Q13	Employees of this centre are too busy to respond to customer requests promptly.
Q14	You can trust employees of this centre.
Q15	Customers can feel safe in their transactions with this centre's employees.
Q16	Employees of this centre are always polite.
Q17	Employees get adequate support from this centre to do their jobs well.
Q18	This centre does not give individual attention to customers.
Q19	Employees of this centre do not give personal attention.
Q20	Employees of this centre do not know what customers' needs are.
Q21	This centre does not have the customers' best interests at heart.
Q22	This centre does not have operating hours convenient to their customers.

**Table 11 Service Quality Questions Incorporated within the Questionnaire Instrument.**

(The full questionnaire is given in the appendices)

### **7.3.4 Survey Methodology for Stage 2 (Quantitative Elements)**

#### **(a) The Employees Viewpoint**

The difficulty of measuring expectations from the customers viewpoint has already been extensively noted. Service industries however establish strong relationships between front line staff and their customers. When service encounters have strong scripts, the employee and customer are likely to share expectations (Bitner and Booms 1994). Role and script theory, combined with the routine nature of many of the service encounters, suggests that customers and employees are likely to share a common perspective on service experiences. This identifies staff as a useful source of information and perception with regard to performance evaluation. Contact employees



have been identified in the previous studies as good sources of information on customer attitudes (Schneider 1980; Schneider and Bowen 1985). Limitations however apply in that routine service encounters where repeat experiences occur on a regular basis produce better results (Bitner and Booms 1994). Therefore, since many customers of sport and recreation centres attend once or more a week, (in excess of 80%), (Knight, Cavanagh and Page 1997), the employees of sports and recreation centres offer a potentially good data source.

Studies normally select respondents via sampling methodologies to establish some form of representative group of the population in question (Churchill 1999). The quantitative element of this study however, sent questionnaires to all staff of the departments. This eliminated the need to develop complex criteria and sampling methodology issues. A visual check of the questionnaires received also revealed a number of responses which were not valid. These fell into the following categories:

Completed the first page and no other.	(4)
Completed the first and second page and no other.	(2)
Completed a single number for all responses.	(2)
Handed back questionnaire with no responses	(2)

These were eliminated from the study. The total number of questionnaires received were therefore shown on table 12.

	Received	Full time staff	% response
Case A	29	44	66
Case B	25	48	52
Case C	33	62	53
Case D	14	38	37
Total	101	192	52

Table 12 Responses for the Market Orientation/Service Quality Questionnaire

The numbers of full time staff at the centres were identified by the Directors of each leisure department. The response rates for each local authority are given in the table above and compares favourably with other studies, (for example Jaworski and Kohli 1993) although it is noted that most other studies are conducted via a postal survey method. The response rate was therefore considered satisfactory for the purposes of this study.

A further face validity check was undertaken to review the number of “don’t know” or responses coded “8” for the quantitative research instrument. The overall response for code “8” was 7.9% which was considered acceptable in view of the range of staff that were returning questionnaires. None of the responses for those questions were used in the data analysis. Some questions did receive higher code 8 responses, and questions which received responses above twice the average (15.8%) are reviewed in more detail and are shown as follows:

IG 7	We collect industry information by informal means (e.g., lunch with industry friends, talks with trade partners).	19%
ID1	A lot of informal “hall talk” in this centre concerns our competitors’ tactics or strategies.	18%
ID 3	Marketing personnel in our business unit spend time discussing customers’ future needs with other functional departments.	18%
ID 7	There is minimal communication between marketing and central departments concerning market developments.	18%
R2	Principles of market segmentation drive new product development efforts in this business unit.	28%
R6	Several departments get together periodically to plan a response to changes taking place in our business environment.	18%

It can be seen from the above, that all the questions which received relatively high “don’t know” responses were from the market orientation section. This is most likely

that it is a reflection of some staff not being familiar with the processes involved, and with the exception of question R2, the levels are static at about 18%. This check provides sufficient evidence that respondents were able to answer questions appropriately.

## **7.4 Stage 2b: Qualitative Research Design Issues**

The research elements under consideration in this stage identified under Chapter 6, Research Methodology, were interviews with management staff, document and archive record analysis.

### **7.4.1 Interviews with Management Staff**

One of the major purposes of the interview stage in this study is to corroborate facts and triangulate the results identified via the market orientation and service quality data questionnaires. Specific questions need to be worded under such circumstances which do not allow the respondent to “echo the same thoughts” (Yin 1994: p85). Questions will therefore be asked about role, function and measurement of the phenomena of the study.

The interviews were conducted with a purposive sample (Churchill 1995) of the key management staff of each local authority public sector sport and recreation service provider. The selection of these staff was based upon the premise that they are the key decision makers, and their role is crucial in the marketing and service delivery (Caruana et al. 1999). The management staff interviewed for each local authority therefore included:

1. Chief Officer
2. Client Officer

3. Contract Officer
4. Managers of each of the facilities
5. Marketing Managers (departmental) of each local authority (if present).

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The purpose of using such equipment is to provide a more accurate rendition of the interview than any other method (Yin 1994: p86). It eliminates errors due to memory and omissions in note taking of the researcher, and in addition, allows for a more relaxed interview, allowing the respondent to articulate clearly their views on a subject uninterrupted. Fortunately, all interviewees of this study agreed to a full participation in the study, including the use of tape recording equipment. The interviews were based upon identifying and supporting information concerning market orientation and the measurement of service quality via the SERVPERF model. The questions conceptual aspects of these phenomena as well as their measurement. The question content for each interview contained at least the following:

1. What do you see as marketing for the major sport and recreation centres?
2. What mechanisms are in place for effective marketing of the centres?
3. What is your view of the departments approach to customer orientation?
4. How does the "system" help or hinder in the marketing function?
5. How does the "system" help or hinder with regard to improving Services Quality?
6. How would you describe the role of marketing for the major centres?
7. For marketing to be effective, what conditions do you think are necessary?
8. How do you measure if the marketing has been successful at the centres?
9. How would you interpret a good "service quality provision" at the centres?
10. How important is communication to staff?
11. How are staff communicated to with respect to marketing issues?
12. How are staff communicated to with respect to service quality issues?
13. With regard to the staff of the centres, how are behaviours changed to improve service quality?
14. Are the budgets adequate to cover issues of marketing?
15. Are the budgets adequate to cover issues of service quality?
16. If you had the authority, what would you change to make the marketing more effective and why?
17. If you had the authority, what would you change to make the service quality of the centres more effective and why?
18. Who do you see as competition to the centres?

**Table 13 Qualitative Stage 2, Interview Questions**

Pilot interviews conducted with sport and recreation facility managers provided sufficient support for the wording of the above questions in the context of this study. These questions cover generic aspects of the concepts of market orientation and service quality as well as financial issues. The major purpose of the interviews was to be able to triangulate in some way the results of the quantitative study of the contextualised combined questionnaire of market orientation and service quality for this study.

#### **7.4.2 Documentation**

Local authorities are rich in documentation about almost every aspect of the sport and recreation provision. This applies to almost every level in the organisation, including managers' regular reports, minutes of meetings, administrative documents etc. Of particular importance for all of the local authorities are the documents which specify the provision of service as a result of compulsory competitive tendering. These contract documents should normally determine the level and type of activity, and the agreed targets to be achieved. All local authorities agreed to allow access to these, and any other documents necessary.

#### **7.4.3 Archive Records**

Although much of this type of documentation was sensitive due to the environment created by the compulsory competitive tendering process, access was also permitted in all four cases to records such as organisational charts, records, budgets and other related information. This was particularly important for the attendance and budget data for comparative purposes.

## **7.5 Stage 2c: Quantitative Data Analytical Issues**

Questionnaires were loaded onto the SPSS ® statistical analysis program. Once loaded, two processes were conducted prior to analysis, these were:

1. All code 8 (don't know) values were eliminated
2. All negatively worded questions in the questionnaire were reverse coded (1 to 7, 6 to 2 etc.)

The reliability of the scales was assessed by using the Cronbach alpha score, developed by Deng and Dart (1994) based upon the conceptual foundations of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990). Further use of this measurement tool to improve the reliability of the data was undertaken via an iterative removal technique to obtain the highest pragmatic Cronbach alpha value possible. This is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

The construct validity was assessed by the correlation analysis identified during factor analysis. The use of this analytical technique has also been identified as a more appropriate approach to determining construct validity than other techniques such as bivariate correlations (Steenkamp and van Trijp 1991). This aspect of the analysis is considered in more detail also later in this chapter.

### **7.5.1 Iterative Removal of Elements via Cronbach Alpha Tests.**

This internal consistency reliability test determines the coefficients of all possible split halves of the observations under study. This method has been used more extensively in recent years (Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990; Deng and Dart 1994) and its value ranges from 0 to 1. Values of less than 0.6 are normally considered unsatisfactory. In this study an iterative method was adopted to eliminate elements from each grouping of elements for each expected factor derived from the

literature review. Elements were removed if the Cronbach alpha scores could be raised by their elimination. This method has been identified as an appropriate method for this type of study for improving the reliability of the group of responses (Farrell and Oczkowski 1998). For the market orientation questions, three dimensions were anticipated. For each of the three dimensions, elements were removed to produce the maximum score above the minimum Cronbach alpha score for the group. For the service quality questions, the same procedure was adopted.

### **7.5.2 Reliability Measures for the MARKOR and SERVPERF Constructs.**

Reliability, as stated previously refers to patterns of high inter-correlations among the elements in a scale which indicates that they constitute a coherent whole in measuring a concept. An important measure of reliability is the Cronbach Alpha test, in this study across market orientation and service quality anticipated dimensions. This method has been used extensively in similar studies for market orientation (Narver and Slater 1990; Deshpande et al. 1993; Kohli et al. 1993; Caruana et al. 1999) and for services marketing (Babakus and Boller 1992; Babakus and Mangold 1992; Bowers et al. 1994; Carman 1990; Cronin and Taylor 1992; Finn and Lamb 1991; Headley and Miller 1993; Lytle and Mokwa 1992; McAlexander et al. 1994; O'Connor et al. 1994; Taylor and Cronin 1994). The minimum acceptable value is given as 0.60 (Nunnally 1978) in which all the above market orientation studies achieve, except Finn and Lamb (1991) on this measurement criteria.

The Cronbach Alpha test measurements for this study for all the anticipated dimensions of market orientation and service quality were above the minimum value of 0.60. Although the alpha values were higher for the market orientation dimensions

than service quality, this difference is not significant since it is the minimum threshold value which is important, and all dimensions are above this limit.

### **7.5.3 Validity Measures for the MARKOR and SERVPERF Constructs**

This test evaluates the degree to which a number of different methods of measurement agree on a particular construct (Churchill 1999). Headings under this criteria include: construct validity, discriminant validity, face validity, concurrent validity and convergent validity. The construct validity measure relates to the extent that a scale measures to what it is purported. In this study, the use of factor analysis, the interviews of management staff, and review of documentation provide adequate construct validity measurements for both MARKOR and SERVPERF measurement instruments. The discriminant validity measure refers to the extent that a measure is novel, and does not simply reflect the measure of another variable. Again, the results of the two instruments of MARKOR and SERVPERF after being subject to factor analysis, combined with the case study interview data and document review provide a suitable discriminant validity check. The face validity test is a subjective criterion and is a reflection of the extent to which the scale items are meaningful and appear to represent the construct being measured.

Questionnaires were pilot tested to establish that the wording was appropriate for the industry under study. The concurrent validity test refers to the extent in which the scale items being tested are associated as hypothesised with conceptually related measures (Peter et al. 1993). Initially this was established with regard to the study by Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994), and indirectly by other studies using the SERVQUAL model (Babakus and Boller 1992; Carman 1990; Teas 1993). The factor analysis results of this study are detailed and discussed later in this thesis.



## **7.6 Stage 2d: Qualitative Data Analytical Issues**

A large variety methods of qualitative data analysis are available to a researcher (Miles and Huberman 1994). There is also “not a single acceptable method for conducting qualitative analyses” (Krane et al. 1997: p213), arguing that different forms of analysis will provide differing, often complementary forms of knowledge, and that the analytical method chosen should reflect the methodological perspective of the researcher.

### **7.6.1 Interview Data: Analysis**

Although the qualitative section of this study is primarily directed at triangulating results against the quantitative data collection, it is important that the qualitative analytical approach, it is important to ensure that this method provides a thorough and rigorous evaluation with regard to the focus of the study. As a result any approach(es) taken requires careful consideration in terms of the research objectives of the study in question. The method adopted within this study is based upon that advocated by Krane, et al. (1997), and used by others, for example Scanlan et al. (1991); Gould et al. (1993); James and Collins, (1997). This procedure develops emergent themes from raw data, and maps the relationships between them, thereby allowing a conceptual framework to be developed as advocated by Miles and Huberman (1994). This is also referred to as a constant comparative method by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This method allows themes to develop from data, rather than such criteria being assigned before analysis. This demonstrates to some extent a semi-grounded, or inductive approach to this analysis.

Although this method allows the emergence of themes via frequency counts, this may not be appropriate in all cases. This is particularly noted by Krane, et al. (1997: p215)

who suggests that the developments of themes by such quantitative methods may at times be inappropriate, arguing that:

“...placing a frequency count after a category of experiences is tantamount to saying how important it is; thus value is derived by number. In many cases, rare experiences are no less meaningful, useful or important than common ones. In some cases, the rare experience may be the most enlightening one.”

The importance of a particular theme may develop therefore not only from frequency counts, but from the researcher's own interpretation of the data. This is open to critical scrutiny, and therefore the provision of a clear methodology must be provided so that the rigour of the analysis may be judged (Howe 1985; Miles and Huberman 1994). A major emphasis upon the qualitative research in stage 2 of this study is also to triangulate with the quantitative study of stage 2. Therefore, the combination of quantitative methods, and a semi grounded or inductive approach towards the qualitative elements of stage 2 may be an appropriate means of allowing conflicting themes to emerge, should they be present with regard to the market orientation and service quality section of the study.

The approach as described by Scanlan et al. (1991); Gould et al. (1993); Cote et al. (1995), James and Collins, (1997) was employed in this study. The analysis of the interview data consisted of three processes for each transcript as follows:

1. Familiarisation with each interview. This was achieved by a combination of listening to the interview tapes and reading the transcriptions. This method also helped the reliability of each interview in terms of identifying transcription errors.

2. Identification of relevant raw data quotes by interviewees. A raw data theme is defined by Scanlan, et al. (1991: p106) as "...a statement ...which was self-definable and self-delimiting in the expression of a single recognisable aspect of the subjects' experiences." This therefore refers to a single aspect of a manager with regard to an aspect of market orientation or service quality in the context of this study. A raw data theme has also been referred to as a meaning unit (Tesch 1990).
3. Organisation of the raw data into categories. This process of categorisation is a means by which the data can be funnelled into relevant categories for analysis (Dey 1993). This enables relationships and connections between data themes to be identified (Cote et al., 1995). These categories were:
  - a) Raw data themes: Specific information provided by the interviewees.
  - b) General dimensions: These were more abstract categories within which the three previous qualitative themes were classified.

Outcomes of the categorisation process are the relationships between and the distinctions among categories to be determined with reference to the concepts of the research study in question. The basis of categorisation is with reference to market orientation and service quality of stage 2 of this research study.

Effectively however, the overall categorisation of data needs to fulfil four conditions (Dey 1993):

- a) Categories need to fit the raw data,
- b) Categories need to be meaningful in relation to the data
- c) Categories need to be related to each other
- d) Categories need to be related to the underlying concepts of the study.

The categorisation process can be subjective if undertaken by one person, which could undermine the reliability of this process. Other methods include using multiple

coders to reach agreement to classify data, termed “consensus validation”, or using a research partner to critically question the coding and analysis (Krane et al. 1997). They (Krane et al. 1997) argue that the consensus validation approach can have the effect of magnifying the researchers subjectivity, resulting in a lowering of the reliability, the exact opposite of what this process is attempting to achieve. Two postgraduate students (marketing studies) were therefore employed to develop categories of data. The first acted as a research partner to develop categories, with the researcher, and the second was used to question the concepts of the first coder and researcher. This required the researcher and the research partner to adequately describe the categories developed, thereby ensuring rigour.

Computer software is available to develop themes once manual coding has taken place. The use of such software was considered however and after evaluation was rejected. The advantages of such software have not as yet been widely established, and the roles of creativity, intuition and insight into analysis can be severely hampered (Dey 1993) using such processes. The process by which the software operates is also often by coding specific words, phrases or sentences in advance and may not allow the full meaning of some comments to be identified. The manual processes described so far have been well established to provide a valid and reliable means of analysing the qualitative data. The absence of the use of a computer using qualitative software analysis packages for this element of the study therefore does not lower the quality of the analysis (Buston 1997).

### **7.6.2 Documentation and Archive Records**

The purpose of documentation and archive records is as a supporting mechanism with regard to the interviews in the first instance to verify facts and comments made within the interviews. Yin (1994: p81) notes, "For case studies, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources".

Yin (1994) also states that there are three main purposes of data collected under this heading, these are:

1. Documents are helpful in verifying the correct spellings and titles and names of organisations that might have been mentioned in an interview.
2. Documents can provide other specific details from other sources. If the documentary evidence is contradictory rather than corroboratory, the case study investigator has specific reason to inquire further into the topic.
3. Inferences can be made from documents ...these inferences should be treated only as clues worthy of further investigation rather than as definitive findings, because the inferences could later turn out to be false leads.

Local authorities are rich in documents which act as management transcripts and records of activity, but care was taken when reviewing documentation since much of the content was edited, and may not have reflected the true situation, for example of a management meeting. In addition to a range of documents and archival records however, two sets of documents were essential to be reviewed in every local authority however, these were as follows:

1. The Marketing Strategy Statement or Marketing Plan. This would give indication as to the means of effecting marketing as an activity within the organisation.
2. The Compulsory Competitive Tendering Document. This was important as it specifies, normally in considerable detail, how the organisation is to operate. This gives an insight with regard to the methods of implementing and monitoring the marketing and service quality standards.

Evidence gathered under this heading is therefore useful for the purposes of a validity check upon the data obtained from the other sources, both quantitative and qualitative.

## **7.7 Summary**

This study relied upon a return visit to the cases initially identified using the Analytic Hierarchy Process questionnaire. Fortunately for this study, the four local authorities which were selected as a result of the first stage agreed to participate.

One problem did arise however, and that was one case had a catastrophic change between the time of completing the AHP questionnaire and being selected for further study. The commercial company that was operating the centres for that local authority had gone into receivership because of problems in another area of the company. Initial discussions indicated that although marketing activity was poor, a decision was made to include this case within the study because it provided a contrast with which to theoretically compare the other three cases. If indeed the proposed measurement tools were to be effective, there should be some form of difference observed between the cases and that this fourth case would add richness to the data and the analysis.

The variety of methods being used to study market orientation and service quality within this study, and the contrast of cases within the sample, should provide a valuable, reliable and valid approach to this arena of study.

## **Chapter 8 RESULTS OF EXPLORATORY FIELD WORK**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this stage was to identify four cases of local authority sport and recreation providers for further investigation. The major criteria was that they indicated relatively high importance measurement against the marketing elements within the survey instrument. The Analytic Hierarchy Process enables not only the identification of the priority value that a respondent places upon elements within the given range of options, but also the transitivity, or the relationship that a respondent may have between the elements which may or may not be based upon logic.

Although a respondent may state that a number of elements are ranked in a given order, the weightings that are applied to the relationship of each of these elements by the respondent may undermine the original ranked listing. This is not to suggest that the respondent may be incorrect in the completion of the questionnaire, this could perhaps be the case but there may also be pressures within the work environment for example that do not allow logical choice of the elements in question. This mechanism therefore allowed the identification of four local authorities that appeared to genuinely prioritise the marketing elements using this survey instrument for further study.

### **8.2 Analysis of Survey AHP Questionnaires**

Of the 106 questionnaires originally sent, 46 useable questionnaires were returned. Of these, five did not contain the financial information needed for the initial comparative analysis. Two methods of data preparation were undertaken:



1. The individual questionnaires were entered onto the AHP software to produce individual outputs for each local authority.
2. Scores were grouped with regard to the inconsistency values for each return. Those with values of 0.1 and less, and those above this value.

Of the 46 cases received, 14 had resultant inconsistency values equal to or below 0.10, and 32 cases were above this threshold level. The questionnaires were inspected prior to data loading to ensure that none were biased due to respondents fatigue and/or completed incorrectly, for example completing long columns of the same number.

The data from the questionnaires via the AHP software produced initial measures of:

1. Normalised AHP priority output values for each of the three main headings of strategic management, strategic marketing planning and marketing management.
2. Normalised AHP priority output values for the nine elements under each heading, strategic management, strategic marketing planning and marketing management. The summated value of the normalised output of each of the nine elements equalled the proportion of the main heading under which the elements were grouped.
3. Inconsistency values for each of (1) and (2) for three groups overall and one for each of inconsistency values below 0.10, and above 0.10.

### 8.2.1 Results: Inconsistency Values (IC).

Overall Inconsistency Values: Descriptive Statistics	A IC: ALL	B IC >0.1	C IC ≤0.1
Mean	00.17	0.214	0.07
Standard Deviation	00.16	0.173	0.02
Kurtosis	18.57	16.26	-0.69
Skewness	03.76	3.65	-0.30
Count	46	32	14

Table 14 Overall Inconsistency Values: Descriptive Statistics

The results of the inconsistency values outputs are shown on table 14. The descriptive statistics for all cases (column A), average values where the IC > 0.1 (column B), and for average IC values ≤ 0.10 (column C) are given. The majority of questionnaires,

(32 in number) produced IC values which were above the significance value of 0.10. The remaining 14 fell below this limit. The Kurtosis value for all cases is sharply significant at a value of 18.57, much above what would be expected (0 for a normal distribution).

The standard deviation indicates that the majority of values are well above the threshold IC significance value of 0.1. The column denoted “C” (individual cases where  $IC < 0.10$ ) has a mean value of 0.07. The distribution for this group also has a negative skewness, which suggests a greater proportion of the values are very slightly concentrated towards the higher end of the range (0.10). The Kurtosis value is in sharp contrast to that of the group B, the distribution being slightly flatter than that of a normal distribution.

**8.2.2 Comparison of each of the Sub-Groups**

The statistical results for each of the groupings of strategic marketing, strategic marketing planning and marketing management varied. For the purpose of analysis these were grouped under the three main headings of all responses (column A), responses whose value is above 0.10 (column B), and responses whose value is 0.10 or below (column C). These are shown on table 15.

Inconsistency Values	SM-IC A	SMP-IC A	MM-IC A	SM-IC B	SMP-IC B	MM-IC B	SM-IC C	SMP-IC C	MM-IC C
Mean	0.153	0.146	0.135	0.359	0.335	0.306	0.083	0.061	0.071
Standard Deviation	0.095	0.114	0.082	0.202	0.168	0.196	0.042	0.030	0.047
Kurtosis	2.031	3.632	0.319	-1.204	-0.877	-1.062	-0.677	-0.669	3.406
Skewness	1.323	1.790	0.887	0.411	0.573	0.544	0.488	0.429	1.884
Count	46	46	46	32	32	32	14	14	14
Confidence 95%	0.028	0.034	0.024	0.073	0.061	0.071	0.023	0.014	0.025

**Table 1S Descriptive Statistics for Inconsistency Values**  
Columns A denotes all cases (46), Columns B: IC values > 0.10, Columns C: IC values =<0.10.

*Strategic Marketing (SM-IC), Strategic Marketing Planning (SMP-IC), Marketing Management (MM-IC).*

**(a) Strategic Marketing (code SM-IC)**

The inconsistency values for groups B and C are markedly different. The average inconsistency is 4.32 times larger for group B compared to group C. Both values are significant at a 95% level of confidence in terms of threshold inconsistency value of 0.10 and in terms of the average for the total number of cases. The Kurtosis values show that the distributions are flatter than compared to a normal distribution. The skewness values both show a small positive value, implying a slight trend towards the higher values for each group.

**(b) Strategic Marketing Planning (code SMP-IC)**

Mean values for each of the two groups show very significant differences. The value for the average mean of group C (IC <0.10) being the lowest of all values returned. This is possibly indicative of a cohesive understanding of this topic, for group C organisations.

**(c) Marketing Management.**

The inconsistency average for group B, was very high at 0.306, and significantly above the threshold level of 0.10. The IC value in group C was significantly lower (at 95%) at 0.071. Different to all other values group C kurtosis was 3.40. This positive

value implies a cohesiveness across the sample which could indicate respondent understanding of the elements in this group. Of the three groups, it was expected that this would be the most likely area for this to occur due to apparent common knowledge of the tools of marketing management reported in the literature review. The higher positive skewness in comparison to the other values could also be an indication of a trend towards consistent decision making within this group.

### **8.2.3 Overall Evaluation of the Inconsistency Measurement**

Under columns "A" (all cases) from table 15, although the average value for each of the dimensions is above the normal threshold value of 0.10, they are still below the upper acceptable limit of 0.20 (Saaty 1980) at 0.153, 0.146 and 0.135 for each of the groupings of strategic marketing, strategic marketing planning and marketing management respectively. The greater value attributed to the dimensional construct of strategic marketing suggests that of the three, the elements of this group are more problematic to prioritise by respondents.

When the results are grouped according to the threshold limit of 0.10 and above however, the average values returned are more telling. The average values are in the range of 0.359 to 0.306, which is indicative of serious priority difficulties in terms of evaluation and are considerably above the acceptable limit of 0.20.

The final group, where the IC value is less than 0.10, the averaged returned values were 0.083, 0.061 and 0.71 for each of the dimensions of strategic marketing, strategic marketing planning and marketing management respectively. This very exacting result is best with regard to the strategic marketing planning grouping

reflecting the lowest IC average. This was an unexpected result, since the tools of marketing management are implied from the literature to be better understood.

In order to understand if any underlying trends exist within the data in terms of the three dimensional constructs, or if some elements of each the three groups were inappropriately incorporated, a factor analytic approach was adopted. The results of which are discussed next.

#### **8.2.4 Results: Factor Analysis of the AHP Data**

Although the Analytic Hierarchy Process produced apparently acceptable results, each local authority response being internally reliable due to the transitivity measurement, a validity measurement was necessary for the purpose of triangulation to identify if the data could be reduced to the equivalent of the three major groups initially identified from the literature.

Factor Analysis, Full Data Set			
Factors	1	2	3
Elements			
MM1	.665	-.148	-.019
MM2	.683	-.007	-.088
MM3	.744	-.208	.237
MM4	.431	-.252	-.403
MM5	.812	-.009	-.245
MM6	.718	-.005	-.137
MM7	.746	-.118	.155
MM8	.555	-.205	.495
MM9	.742	-.189	.274
SM1	-.515	-.381	-.103
SM2	-.403	-.402	-.149
SM3	-.547	-.515	-.372
SM4	-.413	-.517	-.140
SM5	-.589	-.253	.417
SM6	-.606	-.548	-.058
SM7	-.523	-.416	-.193
SM8	-.398	-.449	.533
SM9	-.321	-.389	.650
SMP1	-.100	.442	.133
SMP2	-.092	.797	-.129
SMP3	-.181	.662	.250
SMP4	-.165	.652	.051
SMP5	-.118	.797	.049
SMP6	-.305	.651	-.131
SMP7	-.132	.711	-.180
SMP8	-.253	.714	.055
SMP9	-.165	.521	.355

Table 16 Factor Analysis of AHP Output for all cases (46)

	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.630	24.741	24.741
2	6.004	22.237	46.978
3	2.041	7.559	54.537

Table 17 Cumulative Variance, All Cases (46)

Although this reliability test is resolved internally via the inconsistency value, if an underlying trend could be identified, this would confirm or otherwise the validity of the data as provided by the full respondent group. Principal component analysis was

chosen over factor analysis, this being a method to reduce the 27 components to three real rather than hypothetical factors (Kline 1994).

Principal component analysis was conducted on the full set of data without any rotations via SPSS, the results of which are shown on table 16. Due to the sample size (46), the factor loading limit was set at 0.60 to eliminate cross loading problems, and three factors selected. The eigenvalue limits given were also set above the numeric value of 1. Table 17 shows the loading values for each of the three factors, all are well above the limits set, and in all account for 54.4% of the variability. In addition to this, Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to determine the appropriateness of this analytic approach. This resulted in a test value of 1409 at a significance shown of >.00000. This therefore implied that this data set is appropriate for factoring (Sharma 1996). The analysis produced factor loadings at the level >0.60 that fell clearly into the two groupings, of marketing management and strategic marketing planning. The elements which were not included within these two groups were as follows:

- MM4: Promotion of products and services.
- MM8: Clarity of target segmentation to identified products and services.
- SMP1: Synergy between management levels.
- SMP9: Flexibility of staff to respond to changing consumer needs.

Only two elements of the strategic marketing group (SM6 and SM9) loaded above the threshold value of 0.60 within this analysis. The failure of any significant loading on the strategic marketing elements could be the result of questionnaire design error, respondent error, or organisational pressures. It may even be a more basic recognition that organisations have difficulties and are not able to perform this function effectively and the AHP measurement instrument enables the identification of this issue.

By excluding strategic marketing planning construct, and using the groupings of strategic marketing planning and marketing management, these do appear to offer a mechanism to select organisations that consider these dimensions constructs as a high priority, provided that the inconsistency value is below the upper acceptable limit of 0.20.

### 8.2.5 Selection of Cases for Further Study

Review of all 46 cases identified four that produced the strategic marketing planning and marketing management outputs as higher priority than strategic marketing. The inconsistency values were also below an acceptable limit of 0.20. The values returned for these four cases are shown on table 18.

Case No.	IC Value	Construct Value	Priority
36	0.071	SMP	0.584
		MM	0.281
		SM	0.135
41	0.143	MM	0.614
		SMP	0.268
		SM	0.118
42	0.151	MM	0.651
		SMP	0.235
		SM	0.114
64	0.157	MM	0.627
		SMP	0.279
		SM	0.094

**Table 18 Priority Values of Top Four Cases**

SM=Strategic marketing, SMP=Strategic marketing planning, MM=Marketing management

The priority values returned for the marketing management and strategic marketing planning elements were considerably higher compared to the value for the construct of strategic marketing in all four cases. In each of the three cases respectively,



marketing management as a priority was placed 2.3, 2.7 and 2.3 times in value higher than that of strategic marketing planning suggesting a high level of emphasis with regard to the marketing management elements construct. The local authority with the lowest inconsistency value however placed strategic marketing planning at a higher priority than marketing management, it being approximately 2.1 times the value. At this stage, the only identified difference is the cut off value of 0.10 inconsistency value which differentiates the first case from the remaining three. These cases are however the highest priority values of strategic marketing planning and marketing management recorded of all returned cases, and does indicate an emphasis of marketing related emphasis within the decision making of each local authority, and thereby placing these cases within the criteria for further investigation for the purposes of this study.

As a result of this process therefore, the Chief Officer for each Local Authority was contacted by telephone in the first instance with a request for their permission for participation in the research process for this study. Fortunately for the purposes of this study, all four of the Chief Officers of the local authorities contacted gave their permission for their department to participate in further research. Following this, programmes of meetings and interviews were arranged with key members of staff of each local authority to conduct the further quantitative and qualitative stages of this study.

### **8.3 Summary**

This stage has provided four cases which can be investigated further to consider the dimensional constructs of market orientation and service quality. Although complex,

the method adopted (the Analytic Hierarchy Process) has shown to be an internally reliable method to indicate the ability of respondents to present “their view” with regard to marketing effectiveness for the sport and recreation providers of their authority. It was possible to eliminate from the enquiry those cases which appeared to be unsuitable due to the combination of priority and inconsistency measurements.

Chapter 9 QUANTITATIVE DATA FINDINGS.

9.1 Introduction

The questionnaire was composed of two major sections, market orientation and service quality. Each of these is evaluated in turn, initially to determine if the constructs exist within this sample as identified in the literature review. The qualitative stage, described and discussed later in this thesis is used to triangulate against this quantitative data, and between the two methodologies to evaluate the market orientation and service quality constructs as evaluated in the literature review, to test the hypotheses of this study.

9.2 Market Orientation Constructs: Reliability Measurement

IG	A	ID	B	R	C
1	.6388	11	.6489	21	.8946
2	.6300	12	.6360	22	.8802
3	.8153	13	.8186	24	.8840
5	.8321	14	.8410	26	.8881
6	.8419	15	.8277	27	.8778
7	.8273	16	.8229	28	.8953
8	.8264			29	.8880
10	.8307			30	.8929
				31	.8915
				32	.8772
	.8485		.8568		.8973

Table 19 Cronbach Alpha Values for Market Orientation Constructs.

IG = Intelligence generation, ID = Intelligence dissemination, R = Responsiveness.  
Columns A, B, C = Cronbach alpha if that element removed from group.

Initially the 32 item scale was subjected to Cronbach alpha reliability tests for each of the three groupings relating to the dimensional constructs of Kohli et al. (1993) identified in the literature review. The three values found were above the minimum accepted values, but were improved by an iterative removal process to increase the reliability of the data (table 19). This process was stopped when the alpha levels reached were above the maximum value obtained for each group. The questions listed were under the dimensional constructs for intelligence generation (IG), intelligence

dissemination (ID) and responsiveness (R). The Cronbach alpha values returned were the maximum possible under each of the three groupings and were satisfactory, i.e. above the minimum acceptable limit of 0.60 for this test (Sharma 1996). This set of data was therefore subjected to principle component analysis.

### 9.2.1 Factor Analysis: Market Orientation Constructs

Component Extracted	Initial Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative %
	Total		
1	9.979	41.578	41.578
2	2.086	8.691	50.269
3	1.353	5.636	55.906
4	1.180	4.915	60.821
5	1.178	4.909	65.729
6	1.038	4.325	70.054
7	.920	3.835	73.889
8	.877	3.652	77.541
9	.759	3.160	80.702
10	.686	2.858	83.560
11	.587	2.446	86.006
12	.503	2.098	88.103
13	.465	1.937	90.041
14	.411	1.713	91.754
15	.372	1.549	93.303
16	.311	1.298	94.600
17	.297	1.238	95.838
18	.251	1.047	96.885
19	.197	.820	97.705
20	.162	.675	98.379
21	.135	.562	98.941
22	.128	.532	99.473
23	.069	.286	99.759
24	.058	.241	100.000

Table 20 Total Variance Explained (Market Orientation Constructs)

The elements which were retained that provided the suitable Cronbach alpha scores for each of the expected dimensional constructs of market orientation were subjected to the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity. These were found to be 0.772 for the KMO test, and 965.62 for the Bartlett's test at a significance of .000 and degrees of freedom value 276. Both of these were above the acceptable limits (Malhotra 1996) which indicated that this data set was suitable for factoring. Principal component analysis was applied incorporating a Varimax rotation (Kohli et al. 1993; Farrell and Oczkowski 1998). The total variance explained in this data set was found to be 70.05% (table 20). The minimum

level was set at 0.60 to prevent errors arising due to cross loading problems (Sharma 1996). The contained elements loaded onto six dimensions as shown in table 20. It is appropriate at this stage to discuss the results of this analysis, particularly because the elements have loaded onto two additional dimensional constructs above the expected three indicated in the literature. This discussion will be considered under the headings of intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination and responsiveness (Kohli et al. 1993).

Intelligence Generation

The data of the elements IG1 to IG10 is shown on table 21, and were expected to load under a single dimensional construct. In the event, the elements IG2, IG3 and IG5 loaded under one construct (No. 1), and IG7, IG8 loaded under another (No. 6). The questions to which these refer are as follows:

- Elements which loaded above the threshold limit on Dimensional Construct No. 1**

  - IG 2      Individuals from our development unit interact directly with customers to learn how to serve them better.
  - IG 3      In this department, we do a lot of market research.
  - IG 5      We poll end users at least once a year to assess the quality of our products and services.
- Elements which loaded above the threshold limit on Dimensional Construct No. 6**

  - IG 7      We collect industry information by informal means (e.g., lunch with industry friends, talks with trade partners).
  - IG 8      In our department, intelligence on our competitors is generated independently by several departments.

This would indicate an apparent difference in the perception of information that is obtained via market research and related activity (construct No. 1), and that of information about competitors and other industry information (construct No. 6). An extant search of the literature, particularly Kohli et al. (1993), Farrell and Oczkowski (1998) do not identify such a division in this area, but consider these under the single

heading of intelligence generation. This may be a characteristic of this type of service industry different to that so far identified in the literature.

### Intelligence Dissemination

The data under this heading (ID1 to ID 8) was expected to load under one dimensional construct. The results which can be seen on table 21 show that the elements ID1, ID4 and ID5 load onto one construct. For these elements this is consistent with the literature, particularly Kohli et al. (1993), Farrell and Oczkowski (1998).

### Responsiveness

The elements for this construct shown on table 21 appear to load onto three separate dimensions. R4, R8 and R14 appear under heading No. 2, R10, R11 and R13 appear under heading no. 4 and R2 appears under No. 5.

#### **Elements Under Construct No. 2**

- R4 We periodically review our product development efforts to ensure that they are in line with what customers want.
- R8 If a major competitor were to launch an intensive campaign targeted at our customers, we would implement a response immediately
- R14 When we find that customers would like us to modify a product of service, the departments involved make concerted efforts to do so.

#### **Elements Under Construct No. 4**

- R10 Customer complaints fall on deaf ears in this department.
- R11 Even if we came up with a great marketing plan, we probably would not be able to implement it in a timely fashion.
- R13 When we find out that customers are unhappy with the quality of our service, we take corrective action immediately.

#### **Elements Under Construct No. 5**

- R2 Principles of market segmentation drive new product development efforts in this business unit.

Elements under all three constructs can be seen to fall under the dimensional construct “Responsiveness” identified in the literature (Kohli et al. 1993). What is different is

that these three groups have appeared rather than one. Those under heading no. 4 are negatively worded elements. Deng and Dart (1994) identified that in their scale purification process negatively worded items were eliminated due to respondent reaction. Elements under constructs no. 2 and 4 could therefore be considered to be grouped together. The element under construct no. 5 appears to be different in that it refers to a marketing tool, whereas the others are more of a pragmatic approach. It is however a “responsiveness” item and loads separately not because it is different to constructs 2 and 4, but that it appears to be perceived as a different type of responsiveness activity. All three dimensional constructs could therefore be considered to be under one generic heading of “responsiveness” and were grouped as such for further analysis and tests of contrast between the four local authorities.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
IG1	.387	.418	.334	.117	.102	.204
IG2	.650	.360	.119	-.114	-.094	.361
IG3	.699	.141	.309	.112	.236	.147
IG5	.812	.004	.056	.214	.029	.187
IG6	.583	-.170	.487	.126	.224	-.088
IG7	.241	.126	.176	.160	.163	.771
IG8	.187	.116	.243	.107	.163	.810
IG10	.436	.251	.300	.013	.291	.203
ID1	.143	.261	.692	-.080	.186	.120
ID2	.353	.252	.215	.045	.504	.350
ID3	.466	.281	.286	.016	.588	.284
ID4	.100	.069	.698	.152	.324	.253
ID5	.206	.209	.684	.208	.002	.211
ID6	.466	.367	.532	.282	.028	.057
R2	-.047	.139	.195	.123	.758	.154
R4	.149	.687	.264	.269	.232	.294
R6	.487	.523	.051	.045	.283	.332
R8	-.018	.851	.148	.121	.193	.061
R9	.336	.585	.191	.421	.043	.108
R10	-.015	.079	-.024	.847	.107	.284
R11	.363	.175	.146	.603	.363	.142
R12	.393	.344	.032	.320	.545	-.063
R13	.117	.320	.210	.772	-.018	-.085
R14	.096	.641	.174	.499	.258	.006

**Table 21 Rotated Component Matrix, Market Orientation Construct Elements**

IG= Intelligence generation elements, ID= Intelligence dissemination elements, R= Responsiveness elements

Source	Dependent Variable	df	F	Sig
Q58	IG_T	3	3.285	.029
	ID_T	3	8.320	.000
	R_T	3	7.346	.000

**Table 22 Significance Values, Market Orientation Construct Elements**

Dependent Variable	Local Authority	Mean	Std. Error
IG_T	LA-C	2.960	.241
	LA-A	3.008	.283
	LA-B	3.097	.377
	LA-D	4.844	.566
ID_T	LA-C	2.689	.252
	LA-A	2.792	.296
	LA-B	3.519	.394
	LA-D	5.750	.591
R_T	LA-C	2.377	.211
	LA-A	2.700	.248
	LA-B	2.844	.330
	LA-D	4.900	.496

**Table 23 Mean Values For Market Orientation Construct Elements**

IG\_T= Intelligence generation, ID\_T= Intelligence dissemination, R\_T= Responsiveness



Case		1	2
C	22	2.9602	
A	16	3.0078	
B	9	3.0972	
D	4		4.8438
Sig.		.996	1.000

**Table 24 Intelligence Generation, Significance Test.**

Case		1	2
C	22	2.3773	
A	16	2.7000	
B	9	2.8444	
D	4		4.9000
Sig.		.814	1.000

**Table 25 Intelligence Dissemination, Significance Test**

Case		1	2
C	22	2.6894	
A	16	2.7917	
B	9	3.5185	
D	4		5.7500
Sig.		.557	1.000

**Table 26 Responsiveness, Significance Test**

The average values for the constructs of intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination and responsiveness were calculated for each local authority and are shown on table 23. To identify if any significant differences existed between the four local authorities for the values shown, multivariate tests of analysis were conducted. The results are shown on tables 24, 25 and 26. The initial test indicated significance for all dimensional constructs of market orientation for the variable "local authorities" (table 22). Further analysis, to identify significant measures however between each of the local authorities identified significant differences between Local Authority D and the other cases. The scale Constructs for Each Local Authority values reported for Local Authority D place it in a very poor position in comparison to the other three.

### 9.2.2 Summary

This data set returned acceptable results for the Cronbach alpha test scores for each of the dimensional constructs. The KMO test proved satisfactory indicating that this data set was appropriate for factoring analysis. Although the Bartlett's test of sphericity was somewhat weak, it was not sufficiently large to determine that factoring was inappropriate.

The principal component analysis using the Varimax rotation method as determined in the literature (Kohli et al. 1993; Farrell and Oczkowski 1998) provided a number of dimensions above the expected three constructs. Closer review of these however indicated that all elements could be grouped into three constructs with only one difference, an element from the intelligence dissemination construct loading onto the intelligence generation construct. A review of the wording of this question however indicates that it may be a subdivision of this construct characteristic of the type of service industry.

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis however has indicated that a relatively large number of items have loaded onto dimensional constructs indicated in the literature (15 out of 32). A multiple analysis of variance test of each of the dimensions against local authorities indicated a significant difference in each of the four local authorities across all three constructs of market orientation. The Scheffe's test of contrasts however indicated that it was only one local authority (D) which was significantly different from the other three, and this difference placed local authority (D) in a significantly lower perceived position in relation to the other three organisations for each of the market orientation constructs.

For the purposes of the qualitative stage of the study, the average values which are significantly different for each of the local authorities will be used in conjunction with the other data available. The values will be calculated from all the elements which presented a satisfactory Cronbach alpha scores.

### 9.3 Service Quality Constructs: Reliability Measurement

Similar to that of the market orientation data, the service quality data was subjected to Cronbach alpha reliability tests, the results of which are shown in table 27. Iterative removal of only three elements increased the scores, to a level above 0.70 for four of the constructs, which although is above the minimum limit of 0.60 (Sharma 1996) is a generally accepted lower limit, (Hair et al. 1995).

	Tan	A	Rel	B	Res	C	Ass	D	Emp	E
	SQ1	.7288	SQ5	.7618	SQ11	.5861	SQ14	.5884	SQ18	.6090
	SQ2	.5511	SQ6	.7225	SQ12	.6098	SQ15	.7040	SQ19	.6578
	SQ3	.7692	SQ7	.7208	SQ13	.4907	SQ16	.6017	SQ20	.7205
	SQ4	.6135	SQ8	.7614					SQ21	.6831
			SQ9	.7668						
Overall alpha		.7409		.7867		.6587		.7275		.7303

Table 27 Cronbach Alpha Levels for Service Quality Dimensional Constructs

*Tan = Tangibles, Rel = Reliability, Res = Responsiveness, Ass = Assurance, Emp = Empathy*  
*Columns A, B, C, D, and E represent resulting alpha values if corresponding element removed.*

Despite the lower limit of the Cronbach alpha score for the "Responsiveness" construct (0.6587), it was still above the minimum acceptable limit of 0.60 (Nunnally 1978). The questions listed in Table 27 are those for Tangibles (Tan, A), Reliability (Rel, B), Responsiveness (Res, C), Assurance (Ass, D) and Empathy (Emp, E). The values shown for columns B, C, D and E are the maximum possible for this data set. For Column A, all four elements were retained, even though an increase score could have been achieved, because the result was greater than the minimum limit of 0.70 and higher than the responsiveness construct (column C). This test proving satisfactory, the data set was then subjected to principle component analysis.

### **9.3.1 Factor Analysis: Service Quality Constructs.**

Similar to the process applied to the market orientation data, elements were retained that provided the suitable Cronbach alpha scores for each of the expected dimensional constructs. In addition to this, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's test of sphericity were conducted. Acceptable returned values for these tests would indicate that this data set was suitable for factor analysis. The values were found to be 0.709 for the KMO test, and 629.9 for the Bartlett's test at a significance of .000 and degrees of freedom value 171. The KMO test was above the acceptable limits (Malhotra 1996), and although the Bartlett's test was weak, both still indicated that this data set was suitable for factoring and was therefore subjected to principal component analysis incorporating a Varimax rotation (Cronin and Taylor 1992). The total variance explained in this data set was found to be 68.24% (table 29). The various elements loaded onto six dimensions as shown in table 28, and the minimum level was set at 0.60 to prevent errors arising due to cross loading problems (Sharma 1998). Of the original 22 elements used in the SERVPERF instrument, 15 elements loaded onto dimensions which are equivalent to that described in the literature (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994; Parasuraman et al. 1988; Zeithaml et al. 1990;) There is however one element (SQ3), which appeared to load separately and consequently warrants further discussion at this stage.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ1	.103	-.024	.139	.775	.081	-.086
SQ2	.307	-.128	.189	.782	-.044	.217
SQ3	.166	.159	-.025	.264	.064	.777
SQ4	.017	.156	.101	.728	-.018	.384
SQ5	.672	.223	.083	.218	-.138	.346
SQ6	.498	.163	.494	.158	.067	.184
SQ7	.805	.217	.136	.087	.074	-.056
SQ8	.622	-.014	.063	.039	-.018	.538
SQ9	.591	.149	.002	.205	.429	.035
SQ11	-.114	.301	.213	-.073	.645	.450
SQ12	.457	-.130	.230	-.324	.564	.159
SQ13	.067	.119	.093	.103	.863	-.108
SQ14	.089	.797	.107	.020	.067	.073
SQ15	.065	.669	.143	-.170	.004	.178
SQ16	.308	.767	.108	.052	.182	-.005
SQ18	.133	.002	.825	.091	.142	.014
SQ19	-.022	.191	.854	.098	.017	-.016
SQ20	.197	.259	.486	.173	.158	.040
SQ21	.475	.426	.325	.141	.316	-.127

Table 28 Rotated Component Matrix

Component	Total Initial Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.531	29.11%	29.11%
2	2.111	11.51%	40.61%
3	1.511	8.31%	49.01%
4	1.431	7.51%	56.61%
5	1.211	6.31%	62.94%
6	1.011	5.21%	68.24%
7	.958	5.040	73.280
8	.757	3.986	77.265
9	.679	3.575	80.840
10	.615	3.235	84.075
11	.524	2.757	86.832
12	.493	2.594	89.426
13	.462	2.429	91.855
14	.402	2.114	93.969
15	.332	1.747	95.716
16	.245	1.290	97.006
17	.239	1.258	98.264
18	.198	1.043	99.307
19	.132	.693	100.000

Table 29 Total Variance Explained for Service Quality Components

Elements SQ1, 2, 3 and 4.

From table 28 it can be seen that elements SQ1, SQ2 and SQ4 load onto dimension 4, whereas SQ3 loads onto dimension 6. The questions to which these elements refer are shown on table 30:

Tangibles
SQ 1: This centre generally has up to date equipment.
SQ 2: This centre's physical facilities are visually appealing.
SQ 3: This centre's staff are well dressed and appear neat.
SQ 4: The appearance of the physical facilities of this centre is in keeping with the type of service provided.

Table 30 SERVPERF Dimension Questions: Tangibles

Three of the questions refer to physical items, whereas SQ 3 refers to staff. It would appear therefore that this construct does refer to tangible items, but there is a perceptual difference of the “tangibles”. This in terms of equipment and physical facilities as one construct (SQ1, SQ2, SQ4), and possibly another (SQ3) relating to staff. This latter construct can still be construed as a “tangible”, but there is a not an unexpected difference as viewed by the respondents between physical assets and the facilities staff. The questions listed under each of the constructs are listed as follows on table 31 (SQ3 is listed under tangibles):

Tangibles		Reliability		Responsiveness		Assurance		Empathy	
SQ1	*	SQ5	*	SQ10		SQ14	*	SQ18	*
SQ2	*	SQ6		SQ11	*	SQ15	*	SQ19	*
SQ3	*	SQ7	*	SQ12	*	SQ16	*	SQ20	
SQ4	*	SQ8	*	SQ13	*	SQ17		SQ21	
		SQ9	*					SQ22	

Table 31 SERVPERF Dimensional Elements Found  
\* represent elements of the SERVPERF model identified after principal component analysis for this data set.

### Multiple Analysis of Variance Analysis

The service quality data set was subject to a Multiple Analysis of Variance analysis to identify whether any significant relationships could be found within the four cases. The initial results are shown in table 32 and significant differences were found for the dimensional constructs of 1 and 4 which correspond to the elements of reliability and tangibles respectively of the SERVPERF construct.

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
Q58	REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	6.728	.000
	REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	2.105	.107
	REGR factor score 3 for analysis 1	.597	.619
	REGR factor score 4 for analysis 1	15.382	.000
	REGR factor score 5 for analysis 1	1.556	.208
	REGR factor score 6 for analysis 1	.860	.466

Table 32 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable	Case	Mean	Std. Error
SQ_TAN	C	2.298	.203
	A	2.645	.259
	B	3.574	.274
	D	5.156	.399
SQ_REL	C	2.026	.159
	A	2.379	.204
	D	3.275	.314
SQ_RES	B	3.518	.215
	C	1.860	.230
	D	2.208	.452
SQ_ASS	A	2.439	.293
	B	2.549	.310
	C	1.882	.174
SQ_EMP	D	2.042	.343
	A	2.228	.222
	B	2.667	.235
	C	2.016	.229
	D	2.437	.450
	A	2.461	.292
	B	3.132	.309

Table 33 Mean Values: SERVPERF Constructs for Each Case

SQ\_TAN=Tangibles, SQ\_REL=Reliability, SQ\_RES=Responsiveness, SQ\_ASS=Assurance, SQ\_EMP=Empathy

Average values for each of the cases against the elements of the SERVPERF construct showed a range of values (table 33). From this however, it is not clear if there are any significant differences in the values, particularly for the dimensions of

reliability and tangibles which have already been found to have statistically different values. Therefore, a post hoc test of differences (Scheffe's test) was conducted to identify if any significant differences existed between the four cases for the dimensional constructs "reliability" and "tangibles". The results are shown on tables 34 and 35 respectively. The Scheffe test of contrasts indicates that these two dimensional constructs each segregate into three subgroups for both constructs, "tangibles" and "reliability". The tables show that there are significant differences for both constructs, but in a different order. For the element "reliability", there are differences and the cases fall into three subgroups. The range of values however is not large, even for case B which indicates the lowest value this is shown as 3.51. On a scale of 1 to 7 this is not a low value. These results however do indicate that there is a significant difference across the four cases, albeit in the three sub groups, which does allow for some discrimination when comparing against the qualitative data, which is considered later in this thesis.

CASE		1	2	3
C	31	2.0258		
A	19	2.3789	2.3789	
D	8		3.2750	3.2750
B	17			3.5176
Sig.		.758	.064	.906

Table 34 Scheffe Test: Construct "Reliability"

CASE		1	2	3
C	31	2.2984		
A	19	2.6447	2.6447	
B	17		3.5735	
D	8			5.1563
Sig.		.873	.179	1.000

Table 35 Scheffe Test: Construct "Tangibles"

For the element of tangibles however (table 35), one case was markedly different from the other three, Case D. This returned a relatively low value of 5.15. This element is discussed in more detail later in the thesis, but the facilities in this case



were older than the other cases, and were notably run down, and as reported in the interviews in need of maintenance and repair. In terms of measurement this is a very significant result.

#### **9.4 Summary**

The reliability tests via the Cronbach alpha measurement for each of the expected five dimensional constructs were above acceptable limits and so indicated that this data set was suitable for factoring (principal component analysis). Although the elements loaded onto six dimensional constructs, it was only one element that loaded onto a single dimensional construct, which was part of the “tangibles” group. Closer review of the questions indicated that this segregation could have come about as a result of the perceptual difference in the respondents between the physical facilities and “people” providing the service. The literature does not provide any examples of this separate construct which may be a result unique to this type of service, in that the staff are an integral part of the provision in conjunction with the facilities.

Multiple analysis of variance tests to identify significant differences, if they existed between the SERVPERF dimensional constructs and the local authorities indicated significant values for the constructs of the “tangibles” and “reliability”. Further examination using the Scheffe tests of contrasts identified that the cases separated into three sub-groupings for each of these elements, indicating that in part this ordered the cases in terms of the responses. The range of values however for the element of reliability was not as great as the element for tangibles.

These results therefore indicate that this method is one which is suitable in this context to gain measurement for the elements of reliability and tangibles within the SERVPERF dimensional construct.

## **Chapter 10 QUALITATIVE DATA FINDINGS.**

### **10.1 Introduction**

Outlined in chapter 5, the research methodology adopted allowed a number of findings regarding market orientation and service quality constructs to be drawn. Information was obtained as a result of a quantitative and qualitative mixed methods approach. The principle role of the qualitative stage was for the purpose of triangulation with the quantitative data stage. In addition to this however, although the data was obtained in a structured format, qualitative analytical techniques employed for this section allowed the emergence of other issues which the quantitative stage could not provide. This enabled the strengths of this approach to allow a richness of meaning to be drawn from the information which is not possible using quantitative methods alone. This allowed a wider analysis to be undertaken, which enabled other aspects of market orientation, marketing and service quality constructs to be considered against the strictly measured market orientation and service quality model constructs developed and measured in the quantitative stage.

A consequence of the mixed methodology approach (Creswell 1994), in that there has been a combined approach to using quantitative and qualitative methods, is that there is no set method to the presentation and findings. Within this section therefore, there is an analysis of the general and particular themes that arose, which allows an outline of the themes of market orientation and service quality to be discussed, and then later considered against the results and findings found via the other research methods employed in separate areas of this thesis. In this section therefore there are three

major sections, (a) market orientation and (b) service quality constructs, then followed by (c) raw data analysis of individual local authorities.

To assist the analysis, the number of statements were totalled for each local authority to identify the emphasis placed upon each of the themes, and hence also for the general dimensions, as a proportion of the total responses derived from the raw data themes. This also enabled a comparison to be obtained between the market orientation and service quality dimensional constructs in terms of the volume of their presence as derived from the raw data themes.

### 10.2 Theme Analysis: Overview

This stage was primarily intended as a triangulation mechanism against the quantitative stage evaluating the market orientation construct. Qualitative analytical techniques however allow a wider perspective with regard to the assessment of the data, particularly with reference to related issues of market orientation and service quality. Table 36 shows the comparative results for each of the constructs identified.

Constructs Identified from Qualitative Analysis.										
Local Authority Cases	A		B		C		D		ALL	
Market Orientation (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990)	161	56%	71	33%	77	40%	55	45%	364	45%
General Marketing (not already coded)	11	4%	54	26%	53	28%	14	10%	132	16%
Service Quality (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994)	60	21%	25	10%	13	7%	12	10%	110	14%
Market Orientation (Narver Slater, 1990 model dimensions)	21	8%	23	11%	23	12%	19	16%	86	11%
General Service Quality (not already coded)	5	2%	19	9%	10	5%	6	5%	40	5%
General Marketing/Service Quality (not already coded)	4	1%	1	0%	7	4%	9	2%	21	5%
Other	17	7%	25	11%	8	4%	7	6%	57	7%
	279	100%	218	100%	191	100%	122	100%	810	100%

Table 36 Constructs Derived from First Order Themes

The analysis of the data enabled the identification of three constructs and three general themes. Items that fell outside of these were coded under the category of “other”.

**(a) Market Orientation**

This construct obtained the highest proportion of responses (45%) and in comparison to the Narver and Slater (1990) model which gained 11% of the responses, suggests that the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) fit was better. The market orientation first order themes are considered under a separate heading.

**(b) General Marketing**

This theme arose not unexpectedly in the discussions of managers. A range of issues arose, but it did not gain as much response as that of the construct of market orientation. The major issues that appeared were measurement of marketing activity, and relating it to investment, resources, definition of this area, and marketing communications.

First Order Themes: General Marketing Elements		
Measurement	28	21%
Resources	24	18%
Definition	21	16%
Marketing Communications	17	13%
Organisational Structure	13	10%
Tangibles	12	9%
Motivation	9	7%
Positioning	8	6%
	132	100%

Table 37 First Order Themes: General Marketing Elements

**(c) Service Quality (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994).**

An issue yet to be clearly resolved is that of the relationship between market orientation and service quality (Chang and Chen 1998). This analysis indicates that a greater proportion of response is taken with market orientation and marketing related issues. Although it is unlikely that there is a functional relationship between the two constructs, this analysis will show later there are elements of each of the constructs which sit side by side providing a combined approach, which appear to be appropriate for this industry.

**(d) Market Orientation (Narver and Slater 1990)**

This was the theme which arose according to the criteria of this market orientation model, and did not gain as much response as the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model across all of its elements which comprise this dimensional construct. One element did gain consistent response however and that was competitor orientation.

**(e) General Service Quality**

This theme arose from the factors which were outside the criteria of the Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) service quality construct. In comparison to the comments overall, these did not account for a large proportion, and the item with the highest priority was that of motivation of the work force. This was seen as a key issue in some cases against perceived harsh conditions. The issue of resources also arises in other constructs as an issue which is considered important.

First Order Themes: General Service Quality Elements		
Motivation	11	31%
Measurement	9	25%
Resources	9	25%
Definition	6	16%
Training	1	3%
	36	100%

Table 38 First Order Themes: General Service Quality Elements

**(f) General Marketing/Service Quality (not already coded).**

This theme arose from factors which were considered from both perspectives outside of the considered market orientation and service quality construct models. This did not account for a significant amount of the total responses (1%), and as a consequence is outside of the focus of this research.

**(g) Both Market Orientation and Service Quality Constructs.**

A few responses were coded “both market orientation and service quality” since they could be interpreted as both. Statements included both service quality and marketing issues. In total however these were very few in relation to the total number of responses, and their content did not represent any form of confusion with regard to the issues or definitions in question. These were therefore not considered in this analysis which at this stage focuses upon market orientation and service quality.

### 10.3 Theme Analysis: Market Orientation Construct

First Order Themes: Market Orientation Construct (Kohli and Jaworski 1990)										
	A		B		C		D		ALL	
Intelligence Generation	50	31 %	28	39 %	33	43 %	20	36 %	133	35 %
Intelligence Dissemination	54	34 %	33	47 %	39	51 %	18	32 %	144	40 %
Responsiveness	57	35 %	10	14 %	5	6 %	18	32 %	90	25 %
	161	100%	71	100%	77	100%	56	100%	363	100%

Table 39 First Order Themes: Market Orientation Construct (Kohli and Jaworski 1990)

First Order Themes: Market Orientation Construct (Narver Slater 1990)										
	A		B		C		D		ALL	
Competitor Orientation	21	100 %	15	64 %	10	43 %	6	32 %	2	61 %
Customer Orientation	0	0 %	0	1 %	2	9 %	0	0 %	2	2 %
Interfunctional Co-ordination	0	0 %	8	35 %	11	48 %	13	68 %	2	37 %
	21	100%	23	100%	23	100%	19	100%	86	100%

Table 40 First Order Themes: Market Orientation Construct (Narver and Slater 1990)

There has been much discussion in the literature about the reliability and validity of the available market orientation models available, particularly with regard to the weakness of the self-reported measures by managers as a method adopted by researchers (Cadogan and Diamantopoulos 1995; Mathews and Diamantopoulos 1995).

The combined methodology and the qualitative analysis of the second stage adopted in this research allows a comparison to be made, indicating a better match for the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) constructs. Whilst marketing scholars have been keen to investigate the nature and purported effectiveness of the market orientation models available, no study has been found which attempts to suggest a weighting of the elements which make up this dimensional construct, where perhaps a differing balance of relative values might indicate better performance. The values provided are intended only as a guide to give a comparative view across each of the cases and construct elements under consideration and would best perhaps be used to indicate a rank order. Comparison of each of these is considered next.

### 10.3.1 Kohli and Jaworski (1990) Market Orientation Construct

Intelligence dissemination gains highest priority of all responses within this construct, which is reflected across three of the four cases. That said, the balance of responses for these three elements distributes relatively evenly, the lowest value being



responsiveness at 25%. The qualitative method adopted however is very inexact, as can be seen by the compensating balance for cases B and C, where the proportion of responses for “responsiveness” is very low in comparison to cases A and D.

This analysis does suggest however that the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) market orientation model is an appropriate mechanism to capture this dimensional construct. In comparison with the quantitative data, case D performs statistically very poorly against the other three. In the qualitative stage, the lowest number of responses is recorded in comparison to the other three cases.

### **10.3.2 Narver and Slater (1990) Market Orientation Construct**

Overall, in comparison to the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model, responses did not code effectively across all of the cases and elements within this construct. This is consistent with other work in this area which questions the validity of this construct, and empirical study indicated reliability difficulties (Sigaw and Diamantopoulos, 1994).

Interestingly, the one element which would have been thought to be significantly important within this construct, customer orientation, fails to appear at all well in the analysis. This is in contrast to recent work in the area which suggest that some form of customer orientation is important as a “next step” beyond market orientation models, that of “quality orientation” (Miles et al. 1995; Mohr Jackson 1998; Rapert and Babakus 1996; Westbrook et al. 1996). Despite reporting a relatively high proportion of responses for Interfunctional Coordination, the quantitative study found Case D obtained a statistically significant low value compared to the other three cases

for the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) element of intelligence dissemination. This could be indicative of management activity reported, whereby what is stated is different to the actual situation (Argyris, 1966).

**(a) Competitor Orientation**

One element however which had significant prominence within the responses in this stage of the research was that of competitor orientation. Using the definitions of Narver and Slater (1990) however, this term is somewhat bland and misleading as an “orientation” construct. Although this description implies some form of intelligence or information gathering about this item, the Narver and Slater (1990) instrument does not capture any form of competitor information.

This element therefore reflects more of a concern or attitude towards competitor presence by the respondent as defined in the Narver and Slater (1990) model. This was found in a number of responses from the interviewees across all four local authorities, but in no instance was any information offered which suggested formal research into the nature and type of competitors that were present. This was therefore consistent with the Narver and Slater (1990) model construct for this element.

**10.4 Theme Analysis: Service Quality Construct**

First Order Themes: Service Quality Construct (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994)										
	A		B		C		D		ALL	
Tangibles	15	25%	15	60%	10	77%	6	50%	46	42%
Responsiveness	26	44%	5	20%	3	23%	6	50%	40	36%
Assurance	8	13%	4	16%	0	0%	0	0%	12	11%
Reliability	9	15%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	10	9%
Empathy	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%
	60	100%	25	100%	13	100%	12	100%	110	100%

Table 41 First Order Themes: Service Quality Construct.

At an almost equal level of response, in this qualitative stage the two highest coded elements arising from the raw data analysis were “tangibles” and “responsiveness”. Due to the nature of the provision of sport and recreation providers, the maintenance and other related activities, this highly placed item is understandable as a result of interviews with managers. The low level of the element of “reliability”, which was shown as a statistically significant item in the quantitative study is surprising, since failure of service would almost certainly involve management almost immediately. In contrast also, the element “responsiveness” did not show a significant result in the quantitative study.

The range of responses however in this stage does suggest that the elements which comprise this construct are appropriate for this industry, particularly where managers are being interviewed. Although the quantitative study did not show a significant difference for some of the elements, the survey instrument did allow for a “don’t know” code. Had the respondents therefore used this extensively for these dimensional constructs, spurious values would have been returned. This was not the case however, which suggests that some elements of this construct are available.

### **10.5 Theme Analysis: Other Coded Elements**

The elements which arose under this heading are shown in table 42, and the most significant element to arise from the analysis under this heading was that of resources. This accounted for nearly half of the coded responses. This element was seen as one of the most important issues if facilities were to be developed and maintained, and in one local authority amounted to an expenditure programme of several millions over a planned period of some five years.

Service Quality First Order Themes: Other Coded Elements		
Resources	46	47.42%
Motivation	13	13.40%
Measurement	11	11.30%
Definition	8	8.25%
Organisational Structure	8	8.25%
Environmental Issues	4	4.12%
CCT	3	3.09%
Training	1	1.03%
Customer Reaction	1	1.03%
Culture	1	1.03%
Confidentiality	1	1.03%
	97	100.00%

**Table 42 Service Quality First Order Themes: Other Coded Elements**

The element of “resources” is not considered as part of either the market orientation or service quality constructs, but is an item which without sufficient support could hinder either construct. It could be unique to this environment, in that performance is not only linked to commercial measures, but political ones. It is an issue however which does not appear to be addressed in the literature within the arena of market orientation or service quality.

The other remaining issue was that of “motivation”, which drew both negative and positive responses but was seen by many as an important issue of the provision of service. The mechanisms which were reported as available to influence staff were noted as being restricted, and exacerbated by the nature of the long periods of service availability, and available resources to take staff “off line” in order to provide the necessary training. All cases saw this issue as important and three (Cases A, B and C) provided organisation wide systems of training for staff, or application to obtain investors in people/ISO 9000/ISO 9002, or both. Poor resources in case D was the reason cited for not providing training or attempting other methods to influence staff.

## **10.6 Qualitative Raw Data Analysis**

### **10.6.1 Introduction**

This section considers various other aspects of each of the cases in this study, using a variety of data sources to assist in the triangulation of the methods to establish the validity and reliability of the data found. Each case is considered in turn, under a systematic procedure which begins with the background to each of the cases, and then evaluating a variety of data sources including supporting documentation and individual responses of management staff. The latter section reviews the data under market orientation and service quality construct headings.

### **10.6.2 Local Authority Case A**

#### **(a) Background**

This local authority was located on the south eastern coast of the UK and managed three major facilities for sport and recreation. These were part of a larger multidisciplinary department, although the facilities were managed under one contract which had been won through the competitive tendering process two years earlier. The management structure provided one contract manager who was responsible also for the largest facility of the three, with two deputies, responsible for the other two facilities. One of the deputies was also responsible for the marketing function of the contract.

1. Leisure Centre A: This consisted of a 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> metre swimming pool with a moveable bulkhead, learner and beach pool, large sports hall, changing and shower facilities, fitness and dance studios, sunbed, servery, and creche. The dry sports facilities and studios offer considerable flexibility in terms of product offering, whilst the "moveable bulkhead" enables the floor of the main pool to be raised and lowered depending upon the nature of demand. Normally the bulkhead would be raised for teaching lessons and similar activities, and in the lowered position for competitive sports where deeper water was required (e.g. water polo and competitive swimming)
2. Leisure Centre B: This facility offered a 25 metre swimming pool, a beach area (indoor), flume, water features, servery, changing and shower facilities.

3. Leisure Centre C: This provided a sports hall/skating rink, fitness and dance studios, sunbed, creche, squash courts, sports shop, changing and shower facilities. It is unusually positioned in that it is situated on the end of a Pier on the Coast.

Total Income for the previous financial year:	£ 1,339,359
Total Expenditure for previous financial year:	£ 1,366,424
Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators)	646,486

**(b) Review of Supporting Documentation**

Compulsory Competitive Tendering Documentation

The specification document issued by local authority A was very detailed and provided operational details of the facilities, as well as limits required. This included for example even the range of the temperature of the swimming pool water. Almost all aspects of the operations of the facilities are covered, but there is a reliance within the document upon the “tangible” items i.e. what can be seen, measured and monitored. All of the facilities and their operation are considered as “the service”, under which the “marketing activities” are specified. It is clear from the documentation that there was a reliance upon measuring the “tangible” aspects of the service for the purposes of management, and that marketing was a sub activity of this service.

The marketing functions are specified, and the requirement of a “sound marketing plan” was necessary as a part of the tender bid of all organisations. In addition to this, advertising, publicity and sponsorship were specified as separate activities which must be attended to by the contractor. Market research in the form of an “all user survey” was identified as an essential activity, but “at the contractors expense”. It is

therefore not surprising that in the early part of the contract when finances were reported as being very limited, this activity had not been undertaken.

**(c) Case A: Interviews with Key Management Staff**

Marketing Plans

The initial marketing plan was incorporated in the tender document for the compulsory competitive tendering process. Its structure comprised a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis, combined with general statistical information about the population trends surrounding the facilities. This detail then led onto the organisational objectives, facility, promotion, media and marketing research plans.

Objectives: These were somewhat global in their detail and covered only major aspects of the operation. They were as follows:

1. Achieve annual target turnover for all centres.
2. Increase Passport to Leisure memberships from 6,980 to 7,850.
3. Increase attendances of those on low incomes from 5,000 to 15,000 per year.
4. Increase swimming lesson courses bookings at the X centre from 350 to 600 per course period and at Y centre from 340 to 360 per course period.
5. Maintain casual swimming admissions at the 1995/96 level equating to 357,144 swims.

(Extract from "Marketing Plan" tender submission document, 1997)

The detail of the operation was concentrated in time based plans for each facility, all of which were listed by facility, as were the promotion and media plans. All of these plans were monitored on a monthly basis and slippage reported. At the time of the study, other than the market research, no major slippages were reported at any of the centres.

### Other documentation

Other documentation reviewed included the ISO 9002 systems and audit documentation which was very detailed and required review of all aspects of the service from that of the customer areas to head office and the plant room operations. All centres were required to comply with the systems for the purposes of the contract and as management control. This mechanistic system relied upon “tangible” elements of the service, but did not provide any information about staffing style, attitude or behaviour, other than just a physical “presence”.

With regard to the overall monitoring of the contract, attendance and financial information was compiled for each centre manager, indicating an “above” or “below” performance. This global information gave an emphasis with regard to income, expenditure and attendance, and was given priority over other measurements at managers and staff meetings. For example the first year of the current contract resulted in an operating loss. Remedial action was taken, and when asked about the performance increase:

“Well we made a loss in year 1 of £200k give or take a few pounds and we made a surplus in year 2, end of year 2 just recently finished made a surplus of £33k and that is on turnover of £1.8 million. So it is quite a good performance, we are very pleased and the projects, we had a monthly subscription scheme that we introduced and we increased the marketing output and very little else, there were other smaller projects but it was really those two areas that we improved and we can look at what we call the five star membership scheme and say that generated an extra £136k, so £136k from £233 possibly derives from the marketing effort, there were other programme changes and smaller items that we introduced.”

(Contract manager, local authority A)



### Marketing: Definitions, role and function

The marketing definition applied by the marketing manager was also clearly a commercial one:

“...it’s identifying and trying to satisfy customer requirements profitably”.  
(Marketing manager, local authority A)

This involved managing to a clear business plan which was measured on an annual basis by a net bottom line income surplus minimum limit. This was also an annually fixed figure which was not permitted to be carried over to the following year, either net income surplus nor net expenditure surplus. Managers of each centre were now responsible for their own marketing plan within the overall business plan of the department, although co-ordination of marketing was effected through the marketing manager.

Two managers however in their interviews were very emphatic about the links between the role of the expectations of the customer, the primary function of marketing, and that of providing a service:

“...the role of marketing is very much their business. If we are providing a service, whereby we are trying to exceed customer’s expectations, and do it profitably, I would hope that marketing is the driving force at every centre with every manager and we are trying to inculcate that with every member of staff”.  
(Contract manager, local authority A)

The function of marketing was seen as fundamental to the operation of the department. The initial contract agreement had not permitted a marketing manager with a substantive amount of time dedicated to this function. The net result was a significant fall in income for the department early in their contract period. This was then rectified and income levels were reported to have returned to the previous

contract levels. The restrictions on contract spending however were very apparent with the marketing manager being personally responsible for the design, creation and printing of most of the departments marketing literature. Although the marketing manager identified this method on the grounds of cost efficiency, he added:

“...I am the graphic design artist, I am the one with the Apple Mac, so my promotions assistant is sort of a day and a half very occasionally. I’ve not seen her this week for instance, and probably won’t see her next week and so it’s very, the actual sort of, it’s not the system I suppose as the actual organisation of the department but some of that is driven by the fact that one of our unstated aims is really one of survival in a contract situation and being the early part of a contract that is the name of the game really.”

(Marketing manager, local authority A)

There was evidence of a heavy reliance on the management side of goodwill towards work output, and duplication of roles. The Director of Leisure services had noted that a number of the marketing skills employed by the contract organisation were beneficial, that staff were willing to provide them as part of their work duty and were unplanned.

#### Marketing: Measurement issues

Difficulties were expressed with regard to the measurement of this activity. When asked about how marketing activity was measured:

“We don’t really, we don’t have any, or only few objective means of measuring the success of marketing effort. We tend to do it, when we won the most recent contract I was under a bit of pressure from my new principal leisure officer to restructure, and we resisted doing that and this chap I have who currently spends most of his time on marketing he was spending more time at one of the centres managing that centre with marketing effort on top of that and no promotions assistant. Now we did notice during the first year of the contract that our income took a dive, and our loss for that year was greater than projected in the 7 year plan. Now we had forewarned the council that that was likely to happen, but we couldn’t prove it then and after year 1 of the contract and got him away from that centre and gave him a promotions assistant and since then have turned it around, but that is in conjunction with other projects so again we can’t say that marketing effort increased therefore it generated a £30k or £50k additional

surplus but our marketing output went up, promotional output went up greatly and it has coincided with a much better performance”

(Contract manager, local authority A)

The mechanism of measuring the marketing output of the department was therefore via income of each centre. Initial estimates are laid in a business plan, and these are compared on a monthly basis against actual income for each centre. A need had been identified for a more sophisticated management information system, but at the time this research was being conducted this had not been installed fully and tested. The view of the contract manager and the marketing manager however was that marketing as a specific entity could not be effectively measured, and was therefore an intangible entity. The experience of the absence of a marketing manager, the drop in expected income and the correlation of a return to expected levels of income once a marketing manager had been appointed confirmed the view of all management staff that marketing and income were intrinsically linked, but not to the level that both could be proportionately measured against each other.

#### Intelligence generation

Both formal and informal means were reported with regard to gaining information about markets and competitors. Due to the financial restrictions, market research activity was reported to be “behind schedule” and to date only one marketing research programme had been completed since the new contract had been taken over. Competitors were also seen in respect of those who were “...competing for the leisure pound”, i.e. any form of leisure that could take a customer away, to a similar service, to a contractor who may bid in the future to win the contract to manage the local

authorities facilities. As a result considerable care was taken by the staff to ensure that financial information was not disclosed to unauthorised third parties.

“...we know we have to be careful about our information and who sees it, because we do the same and try to obtain our competitors information. I am sure we are better at it than they are, because I am sure that we have got their information but they do not have ours”.

(Contract manager, local authority A)

### Intelligence dissemination

Communication within the organisation was indicated as an extremely high priority, it being part of an overall major area of commitment as determined by the council. The major mechanisms described were via formal meetings in which information “...was cascaded” via weekly and monthly meetings. Marketing information was disseminated via these meetings, the subject being specified as an agenda item at most of the management and staffing meetings. One of the problems highlighted however with respect to this issue was the high turnover of staff due to low pay rates. Significant emphasis was therefore placed upon induction and other training to inform staff of marketing and other related issues. All managers reported the communication issue however as problematic. Reasons given for difficulties arising included:

1. Shift working patterns.
2. Long opening hours.
3. Seven day opening operation.
4. Geographical location of centres.
5. Poor IT communication system.
6. Poor internal postal system.

## Responsiveness

The major mechanism of identifying this aspect of marketing is measurement via attendance, particularly for specific projects. One of the tactical advantages gained in winning the contract was the specification of new projects which were started at the onset of the new contract. One major scheme introduced for this project was a “Five Star Project”, aimed specifically at a higher paying customer for the dance studios and gym. The anticipated membership was approximately 1000, and the number enrolled was actually 1300. A ceiling was set once this figure was reached to prevent overuse and overbooking. This membership figure was reported to have represented approximately 50,000 to 80,000 increased attendances per year, which would have been in excess of the previous contract’s specified minimum targets.

The business plan identified the organisation’s intended approach. The operation of this department enabled the organisation to be run as a “business”, in some respects being reported by the Director of Leisure as being counter culture to the normal working of the local authority. This was supported by the view that the Directorate of Services organisation (DSO) permitting the contract to be managed at “...an arm’s length”, permitting greater flexibility with regard to decision making. Responsiveness is a planned approach however, particularly as a result of the compulsory competitive tendering process, and activity is carefully measured against income and expenditure on a monthly basis.

“...we are working very much in a, it’s not really a competitive environment, we are working in a contract environment which means following a tender, budgets are really tight for at least 2 years we have to instigate a number of growth items projects, very very quickly after winning tender, we have, really what I would say a limited number of management resource and so we tend to focus on key areas, key result areas, we have to get straight in and we have to get those off the ground, we have spent, we usually spend quite a lot of time preparing for that point so it not a question of just

diving straight in and running around like headless chickens, but it is a very pressured period and the time goes very quickly and we need those projects to pay dividends quickly or else the contract doesn't survive, we have just completed the first 2 years of this 7 year contract and they, all the projects have paid dividends but it does result in a number of things going out of the window, the business planning process is, I suppose because we have planned for that 2 years, we know what we need to focus upon and our effort really is directed towards that."

(Contract Manager, local authority A)

"Response" was determined somewhat by a product driven culture, the facilities being the main focus of the provision, rather than a classic marketing approach which used customer research methods to determine product/service demand.

#### Marketing: other

Although marketing is seen as an essential tool, it is observed as being a tactical day to day activity in terms of its operation. It is limited due to the financial constraints of the contracting mechanism, and problems of communication across the department impede some of its efficacy according to the management staff. The marketing plans also specify activities to be undertaken, but are very weak on mechanisms of measurement and feedback on major areas. There was however an intrinsic link observed between marketing and services quality.

#### Service Quality: Definitions, role and function

Services quality was observed as being intrinsically linked with marketing:

"Services quality, right, end product. The vital part that marketing plays in that the marketing we do should actually achieve what the end product that we require."

(Director of Leisure Services, local authority A)

Despite the essential need of the facilities to provide the product, services quality is certainly viewed as being significantly dependant upon the staff.

“...we are obviously very conscious of the fact that it’s the staff that staff have really got to lead the way (good service quality provision at the centres)”

(Marketing manager, local authority A)

Services quality was therefore seen to be an enabling function, the means by which customer satisfaction was achieved by the combination of the facilities and staff. Improvements in service quality were interpreted as the ability to employ more staff in the short term.

“...because of the financial pressures, it is a tight rope that we have to get the balance just right. We could provide a much better quality service if we employed more people. As a simple example, either more managers, and more front line staff, we would prefer to have more receptionists working out on the front, we would like a customer services desk, but the pressure in the first couple of years is such that we cannot entertain that, it is within the strategy further along the line, and it certainly hinders in that respect and I think in the old way of doing things we would have been able to justify higher budgets and we would have been providing a better quality service. We try to provide a service that is acceptable, it won’t drive people away, but with that we have to watch what else is being provided in the district (re:competition)”

(Contract, local authority A)

#### Service Quality: Measurement issues.

This was viewed as an organisational issue in terms of the systems that were in place both externally and internally. External verification via the ISO 9002 hall mark was seen as an essential component and a requirement for the organisation for both the customers and as a part of the tactical advantage when undergoing the tender process of the compulsory competitive tendering mechanism. This incorporated a formal system of inspection via a “quality inspector” who reported back on a detailed set of measured items on a fortnightly basis. The majority of these however relied upon “tangible” matters, particularly those that were described and defined in the CCT document. In addition to this, informal means of measurement included the complaints levels, and the customer comments forms, the content of which were

reported on monthly. Informal means of measurement were in the process of being set up via focus groups and interviews with customers, but at the time of this study none as yet had taken place, the reasons given were shortage of staffing resources and finance being the major reason for the delays in implementation.

The emphasis as reported by the managers did rely upon the tangible issues of the services reported from the various sources, co-ordinated by the contract and marketing manager to determine what level of resource, and hence the priority of the service issues in question:

“...my role is to work with each manager, and is for me to evaluate the level of customer service quality at each centre. Whether it is access to the centre as you struggled with today, or car parking, receptions, queuing, internal signage, notice boards, quality of changing facilities. That is partly my role, the role of the marketing manager, and his meetings with the various centre managers.”

(Contract manager, local authority A)

### Tangibles

Two major issues that are perceived as key to management are the facilities themselves and the staff that provide the service within the facilities. Design faults are not easily remedied if reference was needed to the Council for works to be commissioned. Time scales in some instances of two years from problem reporting to repair being reported, this being due to financial restrictions being placed upon the council. If financial surpluses permitted however, the management of the contract team were prepared to invest in building repair if it was seen as an improvement to the quality of service and would enable either an improvement, or lowering of complaints. This however would not necessarily be linked with revenue increase.



One of the major difficulties however perceived under this heading with regard to staff was the relatively high turnover. Methods of overcoming this included training, communication and effective induction:

“We had a day away, all the managers last week, partly to try and get us back on track with our planning processes and having another look at the strategic direction of the contract over the next 5 years, and what we need to do with regard to best value. But 50% of that day was spent on looking at how we could look at improving on staff involvement, participation, communication. The major problem that we do have with predominantly low pay rates, whether we ought to look at a performance related pay scheme, high staff turnover, communicating with staff was a topic of the day and have got to improve on that. We do have schedule of meetings, but those meetings tend to be a little bit too I suppose operational, which is necessary, but we do try and drop in training elements within those meetings but there is a distinct lack of involving staff in decision making processes, and we certainly want to look at how we can develop that,”

(Contract manager, local authority A)

### Reliability

This aspect was viewed under two major headings, that of the facilities and that of staffing issues, but these were seen as combined with regard to the provision of the service. Prior to the compulsory competitive tendering process many years previous, the service was described by the contract manager as a “caretaking role”:

“I have been here, must be in my ninth year now and I came in at a time when all the staff present were really providing a caretaking service, they were all very nice people, they were well liked by customers, but they were pretty much opening doors, setting equipment up, and doing the cleaning.”

(Contract manager, local authority A)

The means by which reliability issues were reported internally were via the staff meetings, weekly, monthly etc, as well as via the quality inspector. These mechanisms however did rely upon the “tangible” items that could be specified and measured, whereas the customer viewpoint relied upon the self-reporting complaint mechanism and comments cards and was therefore not systematic nor measurable.

### Service Quality: other

A term which arose in discussions with the managers was the improvement of services for the customers to over and above their anticipated level of “expectations”.

Exceeding this was a means of inducing customer word of mouth advertising:

“...we introduced at an early stage, and that continues because of the staff turnover, an ethos where we are going to try and go beyond that, where we are trying to exceed a customer’s expectations, I think “wow” factor is one of the latest buzz words, isn’t it, where you are not just opening doors and locking up behind them. We are trying to provide that extra bit of service where a customer will go away and tell people about it, perhaps even come back to me and say, “really was impressed at the X Sports Centre the other day” or Y, everybody nowadays I think is trying to provide a good quality service, and it is that exceeding expectations angle that we would try to introduce to staff over the years, that they have to go beyond the norm. A customer will be quite satisfied I am sure providing the buildings are clean and the water is the right temperature, and is healthy, and the showers work and providing they get a smile when they get to reception and no one is rude to them, I mean that is what we would describe as acceptable standards, but we want to go beyond that and we need to try to involve the staff, motivate the staff to want to go beyond that, otherwise they might as well tread water themselves, so we are beginning to re evaluating all that, but that is nothing new, that is something we have tried to do over the nine years and we have had some success, but is a very difficult one to maintain”.

(Contact manager, local authority A)

Although this was seen as an important mechanism from the customer perspective, no means by which this could be measured was stated in any of the formal or informal systems, other than “the managers view”.

### **10.6.3 Local Authority Case B**

#### **(a) Background**

This local authority is situated in the north eastern part of south east England, serving a typically large commuting community. The sport and recreation facilities are concentrated in this borough into one major facility consisting of a large range of sports and recreation products. This is managed by a local authority management

team which had won the compulsory competitive tendering process twice against a number of other bids.

1. Leisure Centre A: This facility consists of an ice skating rink, three swimming pools (main pool with flume, outdoor pool and learner pool), large sports hall, health suite (two sauna cabins, sunbeds, jacuzzi), snooker room, three squash courts, fitness room, creche, two licensed bars, restaurant and snack bar, catering kiosk and sports shop.

Total Income for the previous financial year: £1,618,754

Total Expenditure for previous financial year: £1,626,100

Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators) 1,045,145

## **(b) Review of Supporting Documentation**

### Compulsory Competitive Tendering Documentation

This documentation was typically detailed, and described the “service provision” covering all activities of the operations of the centre. Requirements to produce business and marketing plans were included, as were the objectives required of the contractor.

- (a) To improve the health of residents of the Borough and to improve the quality of life generally by providing a mixed and balanced programme of sporting and leisure activities and sporting education and training to cater for the needs of all age groups and abilities including the handicapped.
- (b) To achieve the fullest possible use of the Centre for sporting and leisure activities and informal, social and refreshment purposes.
- (c) To provide opportunities for the development of sporting excellence and the establishment of LA-B as an important regional centre for sport and recreation.
- (d) To provide opportunities for cultural and entertainment activities where these can compliment activities at the Council’s other cultural and entertainment facilities.
- (e) To attract visitors to LA-B.
- (f) To operate the centre at the lowest cost to the Council that is consistent with other objectives.

(Service Objectives, CCT specification , local authority B)

These were very general in their interpretation other than to indicate a mixed programme of activity, and objective (f) which provides the only operational measurement which is via a financial benchmark.

### Marketing Plans

This identified outputs in terms of “increased awareness” and required activity through available media. Measurement of marketing plan activity against tangible items was not detailed, emphasis being placed upon qualitative issues, e.g. branding descriptions, media and direct mail operations.

### **(c) Case B: Interviews with Key Management Staff**

#### Marketing: Definitions, role and function

Marketing was seen as a wide set of activities, but only in the context that it was an income driven operation:

“ Well as far as we are concerned it is a continual process, I mean we are talking about X, it's an income driven operation. But it's a big centre with a substantial turnover with a customer throughput in full year with about three quarters of a million people. So it relies on the money that comes through the till, and the people who come through the door pay that money, and only come through the door if the services that we provide are the ones that they'll pay for.”

(Director of Leisure Services, Local Authority B)

The marketing manager of the department, closer to the function held a wider, more pragmatic view with regard to the marketing function:

“ it takes marketing on a wider view, so from my point of view marketing takes forms of advertisement, from internal and external, actual press release, obviously newspapers local radio. We don't do anything on an international scale as such, even though the ice show does actually go wider a field and throughout the whole of East Anglia, and also promotions, and that's whether it's providing complimentary tickets and competitions or whether its actually going out and doing a stand sort of at a show. So I mean, we do from our point of view in marketing take on the whole what sort of

span of what we can possibly do and also obviously market research and what our customer's want, and also what the staff think about the product we are providing."

(Marketing Manager of Leisure Services, Local Authority B)

The integration of the marketing function with the operation of the service was enforced by placing the manager in charge of service staff such as reception and other operational staff. This duplication of roles (manager of staff and marketing) did provide the manager with direct communication lines to staff who had first contact with customers, which was viewed as an advantage by the marketing manager.

#### Marketing: Measurement issues

Until recently, measurement of this activity was based upon revenue and attendance, but weaknesses in this approach had been identified:

"We are talking about developing some new measures, these are always a bit difficult. Some of these include things like, marketing spend per visitor. This is just the first list that we produced a while ago and this is best value orientated. But trying to play the dangerous game of cost ratios which take marketing spend into account and trying to focus it down on specific areas. The problem with these is that there are always all sorts of other variables which, you know we get a really good summer, we've got three swimming pools and the marketing doesn't make the slightest bit of difference it's the sun coming out that brings the people in. But what we think we are trying to develop is more targeted objective measurement; was this year's summer programme for kids more beneficial across all sorts of measures and what were the reasons and try to develop ways of analysing that. But it is difficult, I mean I think probably we are very much driven by the bottom line and if we can feel that there is a degree of measurable benefit, then you tend to get a gut feel rather than actually have. I mean you can develop all sorts of figures but actually what do they mean is very difficult sometimes. I mean the other thing that we do rely on are the sort of customer surveys we do because I mean they, periodically, well in this case annually, they cover the same areas in so far we are able to tell they are consistently applied. A lot of them relate to, well I mean they all relate in one way or another to the nature of the offer and the public perception of that customer attitude. So I would like to feel that marketing would play a strong part in that."

(Director of Leisure Services, local authority B)

A performance indicator system was being considered at the time of this study which incorporated a number of measures which included:

1. Average spend per head (customer).
2. Staff costs as a % of total income.
3. Marketing spend per visitor.
4. No. of visits per complaint/compliment.
5. Income per item of fitness equipment.
6. Marketing spend as a % of total income.
7. Spend per head (customer) of catering.

This process was in its formative stages however, and as stated, up to this point in time measurement was based upon income/expenditure and attendance base line figures. The contract manager expressed difficulty in measuring marketing activity, in that he stated: "he couldn't". With regard to image and reputation, informal qualitative mechanisms were used and provided a general perceived outlook. This mechanism however did not provide any quantitative measurement, although negative returns would result in management action:

"(to measure the marketing function)...it's difficult to actually do that, we do know that we are a busy and successful centre. We do know from our market research and our external assessment that we are doing a reasonably good job. We do know from our market research where our customers find out about us and where they listen, they basically listen to us on local radio and see us in the local paper. But again that's very difficult to assess in figure terms. Having said that, our attendances are going up and I mean I would like to be able to put figures to it, but I can't at this stage, it would be nice to but I can't."

(Contract Manager, local authority B)

Despite this difficulty to measure the marketing function, it is still considered an important asset, so much so that the marketing manager is a member of the senior

board of managers which operate this very large centre indicating its high political status.

### Intelligence generation

A significant emphasis was placed upon the internal systems, particularly comment cards and complaints, as a source of information. These were usually qualitative in style and communicated internally via management and staff meetings. External mechanisms also placed an emphasis upon attempting to link information to attendance figures:

“I keep a list of things I have actually advertised throughout papers and press releases that have gone out through the radio station. We obviously keep an eye on the figures of attendance. If I change a style a leaflet I will also keep, I mean I will speak to the instructors as well as keeping an eye on the figures, I don't just do it by computer. It's mainly a case of looking at the figures of people that coming in, but also finding out if people are actually aware about it so, because we have got the people at the council that are not actually here, it's quite easy sometimes just, if you are going down there to do something else just to speak to people and see if they are aware of something that you have done recently”.

(Marketing Manager, local authority B).

It was clear however that any information derived was in some way linked to both income, expenditure and attendance figures, mostly due to management awareness to prevent deviations from the projections in the business plan in the short term, especially financial.

### Intelligence dissemination

This was seen under two headings, internal and external. The internal system consisted of the formal communications systems, staff and management meetings etc,

but was identified as being problematic due to the shift working patterns and “cross over” difficulties between functional areas:

“Because we’ve got two reception areas because the X is completely separate, it’s important that at the moment to make sure that the cross overs people up stairs know what’s going on down stairs, other wise you don’t see, people don’t seem to know what the other half is doing.”

(Marketing Manager, local authority B)

The mechanism of intelligence dissemination was also considered by the contract manager as an extremely high priority, the problems in this area being a source of a number of problems. Many different mechanisms had been introduced in order to enable effective communication, but this aspect was still identified as a problem area:

“I mean we have, we obviously internal memos, we have a staff newsletter, we have meetings we have all the normal forms of communication that we have. We have a computer screen so we’ve got the opportunity to leave messages and that sort of thing. Having said that we’ve got all of those mediums, telephone, voice mail you know communication is always seems to be a problem in this. It is exacerbated by the fact that we are open extensive hours and I think it needs to be said that some individuals are motivated to let staff know and others aren’t and that’s quite a difficult situation to get over. I mean we are working on it and we’ve introduced more meetings and more focus groups than we’ve ever had before, but if I could solve the communication problem it would be very nice thank you very much.”

(Contract Manager, local authority B)

It would appear therefore that the large range of facilities and the resultant working shift patterns has created difficulties with regard to effective intelligence dissemination within this centre.

### Responsiveness

The key criteria for determining action was stated as “income”. This was determined as part of the compulsory competitive tendering process. Difficulties were expressed



with this method and approach in that the flexibility to change according to demand was curtailed due to the financial constraint placed upon the organisation.

“...because the centre is run on a contract, the fact that it is a sort of 4 to 6 year life span doesn't help because the main decisions on objectives, financial, social etc are done at the start of the contract and therefore there is not the ability to make a change. There is the ability, but it simply doesn't happen within the period of the contract unless there is a huge reason to do so.”

(Client Manager, local authority B)

The planning mechanism and process is therefore seen as a hindrance to responsiveness rather than an enabling mechanism, especially when combined within the financial constraint placed upon the department.

#### Service Quality: Definitions, role and function

Definitions of this topic were somewhat elusive and identified indirectly via attendance.

“...there is obviously bumps on seats in terms of numbers through the door, and that's sort of a poor quantitative measure that I would say that people like me have been relying on for too long. There's that, and you can't dismiss that.”

(Client Manager, local authority B)

An issue which arose as important under this heading was that of “customer expectations”. The provision of sport and recreation, and the customer involvement was linked intrinsically with expectation as a key topic in the management perception.

“Well, it's not necessarily top quality what it is I think something that matches up to two things I suppose, firstly what we have said what we are going to do, and then what the customer expectation is. Now sometimes customer's expectations is significantly more than what we said we were going to do, and that's always difficult. But, I mean I think basically as long as you deliver what you said you are going to do and you deliver that in the right kind of way then I think that is it.”

(Director of Leisure Services, local authority A).

Three concepts arise from this, expectation, performance and reliability. Although identified by the Director of Leisure services as important, mechanisms of determining these three areas by measurement means had not been established with the organisational system.

#### Service Quality: Measurement issues.

Repeated emphasis was placed upon the internal measured “bottom line figure” of income, expenditure and attendance. Other than informal qualitative mechanisms of complaint, customer cards and staff discussion, no other means were identified of methods of measuring service quality, despite it being stated as “important”. Some areas were identified as a “monopoly”, and carried less attention by management in terms of service quality, but a key determinant was stated as:

“...because obviously if people are coming in, and they are coming regularly and we can measure that fact that the same people are coming back and they are satisfied and that obviously got to be very valuable test.”

(Client Manager, local authority B)

This reliance upon repeat visit has been built upon historical experience. Reviews of customer surveys indicated that 83% of attendances were once per week or greater. This suggested that although service quality measurement was not directly indicated, service quality provision was set within certain ranges that were acceptable to the customer, but undefined in quantitative terms for management.

There was also use of external measures conducted by independent agencies such as the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management, which provided customer audits,

MORI resident surveys and user committees. This information was communicated to management and staff via meetings etc.

### Tangibles

The product/service range of this authority was “tangible led”, i.e. without the facility the activities could not effectively take place. One product was considered a “monopoly” for the entire town (swimming pools). The range of facilities in this centre was however large, the authority choosing to centre all major sport and recreation facilities in the one location. Problems were expressed however with regard to the fabric of the building, and that some competitors to some of the product/service offerings were opening with “newer” facilities which were enticing some of the more wealthy clientele away (weights and fitness training). As a result of this building works had been programmed, but time delays had been noted, which caused some management concern especially as a “new” commercial facility was due to open in a few months offering a competing product to the “monopoly”. The newer facilities were considered as a higher quality, and plans had been instigated that would possibly match this.

### Reliability

The majority of the facilities which were offered by this local authority do not have a high staff involvement with regard to the provision of the service i.e. the swimming pools and ice rink. Reliability is therefore easily identified by basic tangible measurements, the presence of the raw elements of water and ice respectively. Other elements of the service also did not require high levels of staff involvement such as

catering, bars and sports halls for non instructor led services. As a result, the reliability of the facilities was in the main determined by a technical approach and the costs of running each section.

#### **10.6.4 Local Authority Case C**

##### **(a) Background**

This local authority is situated on the outskirts of North London serving a large rural and commuter population. The facilities are currently undergoing an extensive refurbishment programme, but are still operational whilst the building works are being conducted. In one instance the facility is new, and is currently only part of a building programme which is ongoing.

1. Leisure centre A: This facility is currently under extensive development although a substantive part of the sports and recreation provision is open and functioning normally. The facilities that are operational consist of a 25 metre swimming pool, creche, children's play area, health and fitness studios and dance studio.
2. Leisure centre B: This centre was built in the early 1970's and comprises a large sports hall, fitness suite, sunbed rooms, two squash courts, outdoor football area, and three netball/tennis courts.
3. Leisure Centre C: This centre comprises a 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> metre swimming pool, large sports hall, creche, bar, health suite, multipurpose rooms, synthetic hockey pitch and grass football pitches.

Total Income for the previous financial year: £2,198,990  
\*\*

Total Expenditure for previous financial year: £2,346,430  
\*\*

Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators) 761,386\*

\* Figure for one centre estimated on four month attendance extrapolated to one year.  
(Centre opened in Feb 1999)

\*\* Figure based upon adjusted budget projections based upon previous year's actual, reduced by 3% to allow for inflation so figures are comparable against other authorities for last financial year.

## **(b) Review of Supporting Documentation**

### **Compulsory Competitive Tendering Documentation**

The documentation under this heading was extremely detailed, complex and attempted to cover all eventualities in terms of service operations and marketing. Initially, contract bids were required to incorporate marketing plans not only in general terms, but specifically for each centre. The objectives laid out in the tender document were also very detailed, and were time/financially constrained where appropriate. The roles and responsibilities of the contractor and client were very clear, even to the extent for example, of specifying that waste bins must not be allowed to fill greater than 30%. Significant emphasis was placed upon the importance of producing a marketing plan to which the contract organisation would operate.

Service quality was described in the contract document by the various operations required, for example the cleaning routines, which staff were required to follow. Considerable emphasis was therefore placed on “tangible” issues, mostly in the operations section of the specifications. Detail routines were laid down, including photographs of items to ensure clear communication of the specified tasks.

### **Marketing Plans**

The marketing planning documentation was the most extensive of the four case studies reviewed, the main document being some 11,000 words in length. Major areas identified are: staff, communications, health and fitness, product development, strategic alliances, youth, research, systems, IT, and a major new centre. These were determined by internal management groups working to produce key activity areas based upon factors including management priorities, customer attendance levels, and

a strengths/ weaknesses/opportunities/threats analysis. The various activities were considered under the headings of: cleanliness, health and safety, maintenance & equipment, customer service, diversity & quality of programme, staff expertise and welfare, and communications. Each of these in turn was extensively described with aims and objective details. Objectives were normally date limited, but most activity was not quantitatively measured. What was clear from the documentation however was that the marketing plan was an active document used by all management throughout their operations, with reference to both marketing and services activity which will be discussed later in these findings.

**(c) Case C: Interviews with Key Management Staff**

Marketing: Definitions, role and function

A number of the management staff were of the perception that marketing and service provision were “what they did”:

“I think that in everything the we do I would not like to classify it as marketing or management or service provision. I think that everything has to be integrated in all actions that we take with a mind to promoting our service and providing a quality of service which using the cliché meets and exceeds customer expectations.”

(Director of Leisure Services, local authority C)

This view was echoed by other managers in the authority, for example:

“I would suggest the everything that we do from the service we provide, the facilities that we are offering, the experience that the customer enjoys hopefully. Cleanliness, safety, everything that we do from the moment the customer arrives to the moment they leave and in terms of those that are using us and hopefully that experience in attracting others.”

(Manager A, local authority C)

I see marketing as a much bigger function than simply letting our customers know what we are doing. So yes it encompasses all of the things that I have already discussed about looking competitors, looking at industry trends, looking at you know how other centres influence their service delivery to customers, are they doing things

better than we are, it's about looking at best practice and replicating it here and that might be within C, or I would say it would be beyond that, it's looking at other leisure providers, and I'd see the publicity part of it as supporting that function. So that would really be the outcome of that process.

(Manager B, local authority C)

Others described this process more classically as “getting and retaining customers”, (manager C, local authority C). This wide definition created marketing with the image of being intangible, and created difficulties with regard to the measurement of this activity.

#### Marketing: Measurement issues

Despite the extensive plans and the integration of marketing planning within the management structures, measurement of marketing as an activity was described as “problematic”. Systems of measurement were all manual, and IT systems had not effectively linked this function. Quantitative financial and other information was therefore circulated approximately two months after collection. Management action against quantitative data was measured against “bottom line figures”, particularly against the business plan that had been initially submitted for the compulsory competitive tendering bid:

“I suppose at the end of the day it is to determine if you have achieved the objectives that you have achieved in your business plan and those objectives can be measured as I think I said earlier in terms of finances, in terms of number of people using the building number of new activities that you have introduced your meeting targets for various target groups if you have got those etc

(Director of Leisure Services, local authority C)

The uncertainty produced about the mechanisms of measuring the marketing function still however had not sufficient impact for the marketing function to be either eliminated or curtailed.

“Now that is a fairly glib answer because what you could say is right, don’t spend a penny on marketing, just don’t spend anything and go for a year and by that I mean a penny on advertising and promotion as opposed to marketing in the bigger picture, don’t spend a penny and see what happens and it would be quite fascinating if you would be prepared to take that risk, I think as I say I don’t think we could ever give up this sort of internal marketing, you know the quality of service, the staff delivering the good service and being polite etc but I would love to have the guts one year to say right we spend in the region of a quarter of a million pounds on marketing, that includes staff uniforms and one or two other bits and pieces. But I would love to say you are only going to have £125k this year and I want you to achieve the same results as the year before. It takes a brave person to do that but it would be very interesting to see whether it would still work out and I don’t know.”

(Director of Leisure Services, local authority C)

The management activity which resulted under the heading of “marketing” and driven by the marketing manager through the management team was considerable, with significant amounts of output resulting from qualitative analysis of the various aspects of the marketing plan.

#### Intelligence generation

Considerable emphasis was placed upon multiple sources of information by managers, both internal and external. Formal mechanisms of communication, e.g. appraisal meetings with staff, enabled data to be then communicated to other managers to assist in programme development. Other sources of internal information included for example architects and contractors working on site at one centre still under completion and even in one case listening to staff who have been in contact with the public in the town centre on an informal basis. Other than market research



conducted, other formal systems of intelligence generation from customers relied upon complaint and comments cards. These were collected weekly and reported monthly.

### Intelligence dissemination

An extensive system of formal communications methods exists within this authority to enable staff and management to exchange information at all levels and across centres. A large variety of meeting groups, team, staff, appraisal, management meetings were all described. Emphasis was placed upon differing management staff being in membership of the various key activity groups. The main focus of the various groups set up was via the marketing plan document, and information was considered under the major headings of this document. Significant emphasis was placed upon the staff experience with customers as a source of information within this process:

“...communication is a, I was going to say a two way process, but it’s more than a two way process isn’t it, it’s more. Staff are aware of their role within the centre, if there are changes operationally or to the programme or marketing or there are corporate initiatives that we have taken on board, obviously they need to be aware of it. They are going to have interaction with customers on a regular basis that maybe I am not going to see or receptionist staff isn’t going to see, or a member of the teaching staff isn’t going to be aware of, so it is important that they are communicating back to me any ideas that they may have or any you know informal comments that people might be making, that they just think I don’t really need to, or it’s not my remit to deal with that. It’s encouraging that ongoing dialogue.

(Manager B, local authority C)

Although not quantified, it was clear that a considerable amount of emphasis was placed upon communications within the organisation, and resource devoted to it. The feedback mechanisms employed were not only management sourced, all staff were encouraged to attend a variety of meetings to promote communication and feedback with regard to the operations of the centres:

“Within each of our centres there are management team meetings, there are sub meetings, whether it be receptionists, leisure assistants, we feed back into those meetings customer comments whether it be from our user groups, customer comment analysis, accidents, customer comments as I have said, all of those are fed into a database, regurgitated, they give us cumulative and snapshots of the way our customers are perceiving any particular element of our service so for instance what we are looking for is not the odd comment here or the odd comment there, we are looking for themes, it is all about representative samples and so on and meaningful information and the systems in place primarily database analysis allow us to put together themes, in other words ‘your changing rooms are dirty, why?’ “.

(Contract Manager, local authority C)

It was clear from the interviews of all managers that communication was seen to be a difficulty that required input from all staff who were able to observe any aspect of the service operation. This feedback mechanism was also communicated to the various working groups that were identified in the marketing plan document, which enabled a qualitative evaluation of progress against the intended plans specified.

### Responsiveness

A considerable emphasis was placed upon the facilities in terms of “delivering the product”, so much so that this local authority had embarked on an extensive refurbishment and new build programme over the next five years. Current value of this programme was approximately £22 million. This local authority had also allowed the contract organisation flexibility in terms of its operation:

“...there is a certain amount of, quite a lot of freedom given to the operations unit, and again as a result as much as anything of CCT where they won the contract, they were given the contract price, right get off and deliver it and so the system doesn’t hinder the process and I would suggest that if there was a return on an investment and that is not just financial but in other ways as well. The authority and the system and would allow that to occur and so there is a great deal of empowerment, (use that word loosely because I know it is another jargon word) a great deal of empowerment to the on site managers and the head of operations who looks after all the sports centres and swimming pools to get on and do what is effective without interference.”

(Director of Leisure Services, local authority C)

This range of empowerment allows the contract managers to vary items such as pricing, promotions, and product/service delivery, with overall financial target provisos, i.e. variation could be made but an overall income and expenditure balance must be maintained.

The ability to respond effectively and at a high level of perceived quality was placed very high on the priority list by all managers interviewed. Difficulties of staff turnover were noted, but in one instance a maintenance shutdown resulted in almost all staff being laid off, and then only those who were considered "suitable" being re-employed. This occurred only at one centre however. This organisation also used extensively other methods to condition and "guide" staff into appropriate behaviours. Both formal and informal methods were adopted. Formally, the department had adopted an NVQ training scheme for all staff. This enabled many areas of this education programme to be tailored to the needs of the department. Management and other staff were also committed to other training and education programmes:

"I would also cite again formal quality assurance systems like ISO 9002 which rely upon an auditing system which is carried out by all members of staff at different levels, highlights if you like areas of concern, operational concern. So again, it comes back to this communication thing and how we are feeding back to people both at the sharp end and a little bit further back, problems and that the systems that we employ are many and varied."

(Contract manager, local authority C)

The purpose of the formal education programme for all staff was the belief that it improved the customer/staff interface, and hence the quality of the responsiveness that customers experienced:

"We were committed to an NVQ based training regime, if you like that is the fabric of our training, our approach to training, there are any number different initiatives, Stewart is ISRM diploma, I am doing a Masters, we have got higher ed academic

qualifications being pursued you get within our centres and lower qualifications such as NVQ level 2. All of our front line staff will have in due course undertaken NVQ level 3 customer care, and anecdotal information suggests that there is a perceptible improvement in their general demeanour, their willingness to interrelate with customers in a very positive way to be able to project through a telephone if you like that positivity. I think within the industry at large there is a growing awareness of the need to ensure that our customers needs come first. I'm not under any illusions I know that it is unlikely that I will ever see bad customer care in my centres and the real indicators are when I am not there and when the manager's not there. But there are enough initiatives in place to ensure that we get feedback."

(Contract manager, local authority C)

The perceived benefits of the training programme were all based upon qualitative, anecdotal information, and maintained by the communications system set up which was sourced both externally and internally. All managers were of the opinion that the system adopted by this local authority was very beneficial and gave management input on what is often a difficult and intangible issue.

#### Service Quality: Definitions, role and function

Service quality was seen by many of the managers as "everything we do", a not dissimilar description of the marketing activity. Manager B, when asked how marketing would be defined for the centre:

"I would suggest the everything that we do from the service we provide, the facilities that we are offering, the experience that the customer enjoys hopefully. Cleanliness, safety, everything that we do from the moment the customer arrives to the moment they leave and in terms of those that are using us and hopefully that experience in attracting others.

(Manager B, local authority C)

This integrative view was echoed by other managers, and was not clearly differentiated from the activities of marketing in general terms.

### Service Quality: Measurement issues.

Measurement was determined by an emphasis with regard to bottom line income, expenditure and attendance figures. Because customers would normally attend a centre at least once per week, throughput was therefore expressed as an indicator of quality, it being the range acceptable which did not deter customers from using the services. Issues of product/service balance which often caused conflict or complaint were also dealt with by user surveys:

“...the number of people at swimming lessons, the number of people coming to our parties, that’s got to be an indication that there is customer satisfaction out there and again we would mesh that with all sorts of user surveys, we carry out surveys on a regular basis, again taking the X centre, we have undertaken a massive research project into perceptions about the quality of our swimming programme, cleanliness, balance of lanes versus free swim versus clubs and so on and so forth.”

(Contract Manager, local authority C)

Management action was then taken to determine the most appropriate balance with regard to customer perception. Other measurements incorporated external viewpoint and included mystery shoppers, quality assurance mechanisms such as ISO 9002. Information from these sources were fed back into management and staff meeting groups across the entire group to determine appropriate action.

### Tangibles

This authority placed a considerable emphasis upon the facilities, undergoing a major refurbishment and rebuild, anticipated to be £22 million over the next five year period. A major motivation of the rebuild programme was the concern of competitors in the catchment area of their population providing facilities which were new and “superior”.

“Again I keep coming back to this indicator of throughput, I do make this very raw correlation between sustained increase throughput and customer satisfaction. Of course, if we invest £6m in the X Centre and it is an infinitely better quality facility, then it is quite likely that we will get more people than at say, BC Centre in another authority because the hardware is there.”

(Contract manager, local authority C)

The commitment to formal and informal training schemes was a deliberate policy to provide a “high quality” of customer service, since the interaction of the staff was seen as a very “tangible” aspect of the service provision:

“All of our front line staff will have in due course undertaken NVQ level 3 customer care, and anecdotal information suggests that there is a perceptible improvement in their general demeanour, their willingness to interrelate with customers in a very positive way, for example to be able to project through a telephone if you like that positivity.”

(Contract manager, local authority C)

This dimension was clearly seen by all managers interviewed as a two distinct areas, one of the facilities and the fabric of the buildings and the other the front line staff that dealt with customers on a day to day basis.

### Reliability

Reliability of the service was determined by two main areas, firstly the compulsory competitive tendering documentation and secondly the marketing plan. The CCT documentation was explicit in the detail of how the centres were to be operated in considerable detail, but almost all of the itemised activities which provided the “reliable service” were tangible in their nature, i.e. cleaning and maintenance rotas, minimum staffing levels and opening hours. The marketing plan document specified a number of areas to which resource was to be devoted. The measurement mechanisms such as mystery shoppers and internal communication methods provided the source information about the “reliability” of the service provision, albeit via tangible clues.

## 10.6.5 Local Authority Case D

### (a) Background

A substantive Borough situated in the west of London. Its two major facilities were built in the 1960's and have been refurbished incrementally over the years. The major facilities were managed by a private contractor as a result of the compulsory competitive tendering process until 1998, when the contractor went into receivership due to financial difficulties in another leisure contract not associated with this borough. As a result, the major facilities have been managed in house by the authorities own management team.

1. Leisure centre A: This comprises a 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> metre main pool, teaching pool, male fitness room, female fitness room, cafeteria, and sunbed room.
2. Leisure centre B: This comprises a 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> metre main pool, teaching pool, gymnasium, male sauna/solarium, female sauna/solarium, cafeteria and committee/meetings room.

Total Income for the previous financial year: £779,889

Total Expenditure for previous financial year: £972,413

Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators) 340,354

### (b) Review of Supporting Documentation

#### Compulsory Competitive Tendering Documentation

This documentation was also very detailed, itemising almost all activity required in terms of the maintenance and operation of the two facilities. One major aspect however was the absence of marketing criteria or activity. The client management who compiled the initial contract determined that there was no legal requirement to put marketing criteria into the document, indeed that to have done so was would have been "ultra vires" or illegal. Other authorities in the UK had clearly taken a different

view. Since compulsory competitive documentation was available from many other local authorities, as were standard tender document specifications available from the professional bodies of the sport and recreation industry (Inst. Of Sport and Recreation Management and Inst. Of Leisure and Amenity Management) it is difficult to understand why this approach was written into the contract specifications. The net result was no requirement of the contractor to undertake marketing activity as a part of the operation of the contract, and if any were, it would be at the contractors expense. The absence of any description of marketing activity within the contract also brought about conflict between the client and contractor, in that each thought the other responsible for this activity.

“Well we had a major disagreement about the contract, because we felt that marketing was included and we felt that the contractor should undertake marketing although it was a very difficult thing to quantify and X from his position had no other option but to say “hang on a minute, this is budget driven as far as we are concerned, we have no responsibility for that”. We even had to call in the Borough solicitor to actually adjudicate, because the specification wasn’t clear enough. Now that’s been overcome, we work together and we didn’t fall out about it but it just shows you what problems we had.”

(Director of Leisure, local authority D)

This was not the only problems which caused difficulty for the marketing operations of this authority. The bureaucratic system also impeded activity due to restriction of finance. The contract was intended to run at a small deficit, and unfortunately was not. The operational deficit was some £193,000, which resulted in severe curtailment of activity which increased expenditure in the short term.



The contract also did not require the contractor to offset any income against expenditure i.e. income was merely collected on the council's behalf. As a result, the operations were managed by the contractor with specific reference to control on expenditure, the responsibility for increasing income by the client. This presents an almost untenable situation with regard to increasing income and is considered a serious flaw in the contract and resultant operation of the organisation. The previous contract however did have a responsibility for income, and this was in a profit sharing ratio of 80:20 in favour of the contractor. This onus on the previous contractor gave motivation to increase income by both improved marketing and efficiency measures, and the contractor was reported as being able to produce some £750,000 surplus of income over expenditure for two years of the contract's duration. This contractor went into receivership because another contract taken on by them in a different local authority generated a negative cash flow, and as a consequence negative profits, which were greater than all the surplus generated at all of their other contracts. This demonstrated therefore that although the facilities were not modern by contemporary standards, it is possible at least to create an appropriate organisation that could generate sufficient income significantly in excess of the current situation, which would in the very least satisfy financial objectives, and could satisfy other criteria such as rebuild and refurbishment with the financial surplus available.

### Marketing Plans

At the time of this study, no marketing plans were in existence. The reasons given by the client and contract manager were that since having taken over the contract some two years previously, there had not been the opportunity to instigate an effective plan due to the operational requirements taking priority. Within the management team, there was not a marketing manager dedicated to marketing activity of the department.

There was however a supervisory/assistant manager whose role was primarily to produce posters for the two centres, but no other promotional literature. This function was the responsibility of the contract manager, but funded by the client organisation. This relationship, although now harmonious still resulted in delays in developing a marketing plan to the point that the client organisation felt it necessary to gain authority to develop a marketing plan from the leisure committee. This process, to merely gain the authority to develop a marketing plan from the leisure committee takes some months. At the time of this study, this authority had just been obtained. It was anticipated that after consultation with appropriate personnel, other organisations and other bodies, agreement from the leisure committee to approve an agreed marketing plan and strategy would not occur for some nine months to one year from the date of securing authority to prepare a marketing plan. This mechanism was viewed as extremely constraining by the management staff, and detrimental to the operations of the department by the contract manager and Director of Leisure operations.

#### **(c) Case D: Interviews with Key Management Staff**

##### Marketing: Definitions, role and function

Management of both the contract organisation and the client side were very aware of the definitive terms of this activity in its general sense. There was an awareness however that activities of the contract organisation had not incorporated any significant marketing activity.

“ Marketing, well in the general sense of the word, is everything to do with assessing what you are providing including market research, promotion, analysing your customer's trends, income, the product that you are providing, whether you are meeting the needs of the community. So that's what I think it is, what we have been actually providing has been a lot less than that.”

(Contract Manager, local authority D)

Although marketing was seen as an important activity, the problems of the receivership of the previous contractor had resulted in a serious management problem for the authority of which this activity had taken a very low priority for the previous year. Marketing activity was sporadic and limited, and flexibility was not afforded to managers to change items such as pricing on a local basis. This was now controlled by the council, and set on an annual basis. The facilities and staffing budgets were also set on an annual basis by the council, so the only item which was under the control of management was the promotions budget. This was not within the contracting organisation, but on the client side. Needs for advertisements and marketing communications therefore, other than internal posters had to be requested from the contract organisation to the client section of the council which produced considerable delays and reduced effectiveness.

#### Marketing: Measurement issues

Very little activity was recorded. The basic measurement parameters of income and attendance against marketing activity was provided, but by the client side. The contract manager, currently with no responsibility for income or improving attendance until this point in time, did not devote any management resource time to this aspect:

“(with regard to income)...but I think what I would like to do, I mean we’ve only got a couple of years left of the contract, to see if we could agree to a change in the contract so there was a 50/50 split on income. You shouldn’t have to do that in a way, but I think the staff felt well, it’s not our income, different department and I’m not saying that they deliberately didn’t go out to get income, but they didn’t own that part of the process. Whereas expenditure was very very closely watched, very very scrutinised to the nth degree, income was more of a secondary issue, and we are just trying to redress that balance now.

(Contract Manager, local authority D)

### Intelligence generation

The department was just beginning to embark on a pluralistic approach with regard to gathering information with regard to marketing, user forums had been started as were other mechanisms of gaining information. A new IT system was being planned at the time of this study which was due to be operational “in one or two months time”, which would give better information about customer habits and usage patterns.

### Intelligence dissemination

The major mechanism reported for this component is via weekly and fortnightly staff meetings. Other mechanisms were reported such as training sessions, and ad hoc meetings.

“...we have staff training every Tuesday afternoon for a couple of hours, where it would be one group of staff one week, one group the next week the way the rotas work. But within those, staff training times, some of it is spent obviously some of it doing swimming life saving training, but other stuff is spent on what happens in the event of fire, bomb alerts this sort of thing so the staff are aware of exactly how to treat the customers should those events happen. Various other issues crop up where things are chatted through it is explained to the staff and what they, what is expected of them in certain cases. We also have induction packs where staff are given information on a whole range of issues, on how the centres operate from opening to closing sort of thing. So there is reading material as well as verbal comments”.

(Manager A, local authority D)

Problems were reported however with regard to the training sessions in that the seven day week operations meant that consistency could not be achieved in terms of communication.

“...would be the number of staff we do employ and the wages budget, and if I could increase that purely to have a few extra staff so that we can bring all the groups of staff together for training purposes, rather than having to have one day of training with one set of staff because of the rota then finding another time maybe a week later with another set of staff from the other shift makes it very difficult because no matter how hard you try perhaps both groups do not receive exactly the same information,

whereas if they are all sitting down together at one time they received exactly the same information and instructions and then everybody within the building would know what is expected rather than one group saying well we thought he meant this, and another group saying well he actually said this or said that and sometimes that can cause conflict within the centre, so we could actually have all the main stream staff if you like being able to actually sit down and get some training together on the major issues that they perhaps feel they need training on and all at the one time would be good”.

(Manager A, local authority D)

This difficulty was reported as being one of the main causes of conflict with regard to communications errors to staff. Therefore, despite regular meetings of managers with staff, and other formal and informal mechanisms of communication, difficulties existed in providing an homogeneous communications method which presented to all staff a consistent message.

### Responsiveness

Problems were expressed with both the nature of the facilities and staffing issues. The facilities, built in the middle 1960's were now considered by the managers to be seriously out of date. This included the swimming pools and their methods of use. Managers expressed an inability to respond effectively due to strong competitor pressures in nearby boroughs:

“From the point of view of X we are fairly near the “H” boundary and there is a huge sports centre in “H” which takes some of our customers. There is another swimming pool at “N” which is fairly close by that we compete with them. There are a couple of other swimming pools going out towards “R” and “He”. “TR” area which will be considered to be probably our closest competitors. Some of those pools are purely local authority run, other ones such as “H” is a private company in there which is running it on a CCT basis. They are the major sort of people who we look at and see as customers. There are one or two private gyms as well, because “Hi” has a reasonable set up stand, gym and fitness. On the gym side some of our sports centres indeed, are competing for the customers to go there”.

The perception by the managers therefore was that they were unable to effectively respond against the competition that had been building up around from both municipal and private operators, inside and outside of the borough.

#### Service Quality: Definitions, role and function

This was defined by the Director of Leisure via the external measure, the “council’s annual survey”. This was viewed as an accurate assessment in that it placed the service on a low ranking in comparison to other services which were provided:

“One of the ways is that we have an annual survey, where council services are ranked in order and for the last few years leisure has been, its service quality provision has been fairly low with residents. We are always flagging up because we have got old facilities and that sort of thing.”

(Director of Leisure Services, local authority D)

This was stated as being a generally “accurate” reflection of how the management team viewed the standard of leisure provision currently in the authority. Managers however were still unsure about the term “quality” in respect to the service that was being provided, particularly against the bottom line measure of attendance to their sessions.

“As far as individual sessions are concerned it’s basically filling up a session, therefore there can’t be too much wrong, or we have pitched the price too low. Doesn’t mean to say it’s good quality, that’s a subjective thing, that in all honesty if we were running an aerobics session say at one of our sports session and they were running at one of the brand new fitness centres you’d say that their’s was better because of the better environment. Depends what people regard as quality, whether it is the coach, whether is the locality. What we are always aware of is that the sessions are underused, so that you can take it that as being an indication that it is not good quality, or not what people want. But it is difficult to say that even though a session is fully booked is still good quality or above a certain level.”

(Contract manager, local authority D).

This indicates a problem with regard to understanding the relationship of the customer and their perception of service quality by the management of the department. Normally this would be identified by the staff and communicated via the staff

meetings which are held. Other indications are the “classes which are not full”, which, although could be due to any number of factors, only now are user groups being consulted to identify customer centred issues of service provision.

#### Service Quality: Measurement issues.

Very little mechanisms exist to identify levels of service quality, other than informal discussions at staff meetings. Attendances at the various sessions are monitored, but these are not effectively communicated across the management team, nor are they linked performance criteria. In general, they are reviewed on an annual basis globally.

“Good service quality, you get feedback from comments, customer comments, complaints, that’s about the only gauge we have really and we look at figures annually and see what the % increase or decrease is.”

(Manger B, local authority D)

This measurement mechanism therefore does not appear to be linked in any way to finance, i.e. improvements equate to increased funding to generate higher custom/income.

#### Tangibles

The emphasis placed upon this topic was not about staff as tangibles, but more of the fabric of the buildings. These were considered to be both old in style and in need of repair and refurbishment. This problem also extends to new product development.

“...we are given a really restricted budget as managers and if you put a proposal for instance, if you wanted to do a new health suite or even put a new carpet down because the customers are saying that the carpet looks threadbare or whatever, you have to go through such a rigmarole to get any funds released to replace that, if you can’t get it out of your normal budget. Invariably you can’t do much out of your normal budget you just can’t do any improvements. There is a hold on maintenance, I mean it’s really really bad, so even to get a new lock on the door its very difficult, it can take months.”

(Manager B., local authority D)

The importance that is placed upon providing this type of service through a major facility is very high, and this type of problem could cause perceptual problems of good quality to customers.

### Reliability

Although the maintenance of the facilities is poor, the services that are being operated were functional. Those facilities with serious problems however were shut and not available as a resource. Under such conditions therefore, a perception of “reliable” could be considered because all of the major facilities were being maintained and operational. The ancillary services however were not considered by staff as being “reliable”. For example, when asked about how to improve services quality:

“a big influx of money to just routine stuff to just provide a better quality of service to the customers, i.e. proper showers that work and proper toilets that flush, the basic essentials.”

(Manager B, local authority D)

This brings into question the concept of “zone of tolerance”. For example if the showers are cold and not working, does this stop customers using the centre. This is not an easy question to answer because customers may either be attending as individuals, or as a group, and there may be other pressures which support the use of a centre with “less than satisfactory service standards”.

## **10.7 Summary**

The purpose of the qualitative stage was to develop a data source that could be triangulated against the quantitative data which had been obtained via the market



orientation and service quality research instrument. The market orientation comparison noted differences with regard to Intelligence Generation, Intelligence Dissemination and Responsiveness. With regard to service quality, dimensions of tangibles and reliability appeared important. Case C noted strong emphasis with regard to marketing planning which was also evident in the staffing structures and documentation of meetings. This was used as a uniform platform to develop a market orientation. Extensive refurbishment had also been undertaken to provide better "tangible" evidence of sport and recreation provision. Underpinning Case A, similar to Case C also were extensive documentation of management approaches detailing objectives, aims, planning issues for both marketing and service quality issues. The other extreme Case was D, which had very poor contract details with regard to marketing and service quality issues, poor marketing and service quality strategies reinforced by a weak documented infrastructure.

An important facet which arose from the investigation were the results of the activities of ISO 9000/9002, and Investors in People applications which Cases C and A were pursuing. These processes provided a vehicle which focused many of the internal functions including communications, objective setting, measurement and evaluation. This appeared to provide an infrastructure and base upon which the observed dimensional constructs for market orientation and service quality could effectively operate for these two cases (A and C), although this was not a primary intention of this activity for either case.

Other aspects which arose included two of the dimensional constructs of the Narver and Slater (1990) market orientation model which were competitor orientation and interfunctional co-ordination which appeared from the themed analysis. As a result some consideration should be given to incorporating these two elements into a market orientation research instrument. Other themes that also arose were, measurement issues of marketing, resources, the definition of marketing, marketing communications, and organisational structure.

With regard to service quality, consistent with the quantitative section, two key elements which arose were tangibles and reliability. Other dimensions did arise from the themed analysis, and these were motivation, measurement, resources and the definition of service quality.

## **Chapter 11 GENERAL DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **11.1 Introduction**

Previous studies have not as yet effectively integrated the dimensional constructs of market orientation and service quality. The debate of both these areas is also far from clear concerning their composition, a considerable number of authors reporting a variety of dimensions which purport to measure a market orientation and service quality constructs. The literature is relatively well segregated however at the present time, with some studies attempting to identify a relationship between market orientation and service quality (Caruana et al. 1999; Chang and Chen 1998; Van Egeren and O'Connor 1998).

This relationship, if it exists has not as yet been effectively identified. To compound the issue, despite the works that have been undertaken in the arena of services marketing, it would appear therefore that it is still not clear how these two constructs are differentiated. Managers in this study have reported similar responses when asked to define marketing and service quality, one for example stating "...it is everything we do", (manager B, local authority C) for both definitions of marketing and services quality.

This discussion will therefore consider the results of the research methods adopted with regard to the constructs of (1) market orientation, (2) service quality, (3) other impacting dimensions, (4) the link to performance, (5) a comprehensive means of

measuring the market orientation and service quality construct models, (6) and finally, methodological issues.

## **11.2 The Market Orientation Construct**

This study was able to effectively replicate the dimensions of the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model, albeit with fewer elements due to the iterative removal of items to improve the overall Cronbach alpha scores for each dimension within the construct. Further tests of difference (Scheffe tests) which were conducted also provided significant results across all three of the dimensions of the overall construct. These are discussed under the section “link to performance”.

One advantage this work has brought to this arena, is the fewer number of definitions for market orientation available compared to marketing. There are four currently accepted forms of definition for market orientation as follows:

“Market orientation is defined as organisationwide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of intelligence across departments, and organisationwide responsiveness to it.”

(Kohli and Jaworski 1990)

“...market orientation consists of three behavioural components-customer orientation, competitor orientation and Interfunctional coordination-and two decision criteria-long term focus and profitability.”

(Narver and Slater 1990)

“...we define customer orientation as the set of beliefs that puts the customer's interest first, while not excluding those of other stakeholders such as owners, managers, and employees, in order to develop a long term profitable enterprise.”

(Deshpande, Farley, and Webster 1993)

“...market orientation represents superior skills in understanding and satisfying customers.”

(Day 1994)

From a management perspective, Day's (1994) construct is difficult to operationalise in the same manner as the Narver and Slater (1990) and the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) models. The Deshpande et al. (1993) definition, whilst it may appear logical, from this data set does not appear to hold significance from any of the interviewed respondents. The results from this data set also do not appear to completely support only one of the two models either, as table 43 & 44 indicate:

First Order Themes: Market Orientation Construct (Kohli and Jaworski 1990)										
	A		B		C		D		ALL	
Intelligence Generation	50	31%	28	39%	33	43%	20	36%	129	35%
Intelligence Dissemination	54	34%	33	47%	39	51%	18	32%	144	40%
Responsiveness	57	35%	10	14%	5	6%	18	32%	90	25%
	161	100%	71	100%	77	100%	56	100%	363	100%

Table 43 First Order Themes: Market Orientation Construct (Kohli and Jaworski 1990)

First Order Themes: Market Orientation Construct (Narver Slater, 1990)										
	A		B		C		D		ALL	
Competitor Orientation	21	100%	15	64%	10	43%	6	32%	52	61%
Customer Orientation	0	0%	0	1%	2	9%	0	0%	2	2%
Interfunctional Co-ordination	0	0%	8	35%	11	48%	13	68%	32	37%
	21	100%	23	100%	23	100%	19	100%	86	100%

Table 44 First Order Themes: Market Orientation Construct (Narver and Slater 1990)

First Order Themes: General Marketing Elements		
Measurement	28	21%
Resources	24	18%
Definition	21	16%
Marketing Communications	17	13%
Organisational Structure	13	10%
Tangibles	12	9%
Motivation	9	7%
Positioning	8	6%
	132	100%

Table 45 First Order Themes: General Marketing Elements

The weaknesses of the quantitative research technique is the limitation of the area of study, in that no other emergent theme can develop. The use of qualitative techniques

has allowed consideration of market related themes outside of the strictly defined bounds of the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model, and indicates possibly that market orientation could be better served by a combination of elements incorporating competitor orientation, interfunctional co-ordination from the Narver and Slater (1990) model. Using the existing questionnaire structures that have been already tested and evaluated this would perhaps, give a useful tool.

Other themes also emerged which may have a direct impact upon market orientation (table 45). The elements of positioning and marketing communications would be considered to be subsumed within the market orientation element of “responsiveness”; that of organisational structure and motivation under “interfunctional coordination”. The concerns with regard to the issues of the definitions of marketing for services particularly (Glynn and Lehtinen 1995) and measurement cannot be dealt with until an established and agreed base can be determined. This leaves the elements of “resources” and “tangibles”, the latter of which will be dealt with under the services quality construct.

Resources as discussed by the interviewees are a unique feature of public sector sport and recreation providers. Although this is a semi-commercial environment, in which the providers need to be market sensitive and most of their revenue income is derived from customers by choice, major development is via capital investment from a number of sources, but primarily from the local authority. The costs of service quality are often not seen and consequently not allowed within organisational planning (Barnes and Cumby 1995). The high level of tangible materials necessary for this type

of provision enables this element to be identified as important and useful when positioning the service from a marketing perspective (Flipo 1988). This determines short and longer term development, and there is a need, identified by this data set to establish an effective means by which to measure this. The convenience of “adding to the list” after appropriate validity and reliability tests would be appropriate, but the pluralistic nature of the environment would only enable a view of “what is needed” rather than “how the resources are being deployed”. This latter concept could perhaps be subsumed under the element of “responsiveness”, leaving the way clear to include this element of “resources” to be developed and included within the quantitative study, and not requiring it to be investigated by other research methods, most probably via a qualitative approach.

### **11.3 The Service Quality Construct**

The quantitative section of this study was able to replicate the dimensions of the service quality construct, albeit with a fewer number of elements supporting the work of Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) in this area. It was not as well supported however within the qualitative phase. The two highest rated elements were those of “tangibles” and “reliability”. “Empathy” gained a very poor level of value either in terms of the number of times it was discussed by interviewees, or whether it was considered important by any individual. This last element may be unique to this type of provision, in that much of the activities are undertaken by customers in tangible facilities. It is therefore not surprising that “tangibles” appears high on the listings.

First Order Themes: Service Quality Construct.										
	A		B		C		D		ALL	
Tangibles	15	25%	15	60%	10	77%	6	50%	46	42%
Reliability	26	44%	5	20%	3	23%	6	50%	40	36%
Assurance	8	13%	4	16%	0	0%	0	0%	12	11%
Responsiveness	9	15%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	10	9%
Empathy	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%
	60	100%	25	100%	13	100%	12	100%	110	100%

Table 46 First Order Themes: Service Quality Construct

Although this was established via principle component analysis, only two elements of the service quality construct were found to have significant values when compared across the four case studies. These two elements, “tangibles” and “reliability” were also found to have a relatively high level of support in the qualitative section of the study. For the second of these two elements, this is consistent with Parasuraman et al.’s (1991) work, that found this was the most important element of the service quality dimensional construct. In this study, this presented the greatest range of values indicating a useful measurement method for this element.

## 11.4 Other Impacting Dimensions

### 11.4.1 Customer Expectations

This element does not appear to be significant with regard to the managers of this sample, either as a theme or as individual discussions from the qualitative study. Thus it would appear therefore not to be an issue which management of any of the cases would want developed for measurement. Berry and Parasuraman (1991) suggest that the management of expectations involves: (1) a realistic picture of the service is portrayed to the customer, (2) a premium is placed upon company reliability, (3) effective communications with customers takes place, (4) employees excel during service performance and exceed customers expectations, and (5) the recovery situation is exploited to the full. The nature of the service in this study, in that a



majority of customers attend very regularly items (1), (2) and (3) are logical from a management point of view.

One difficulty which presents itself with this list of "Management of Expectations" with regard to the industry of this study is the integral nature of the physical facilities and staff. Without either the service cannot be provided, and exceeding a customer expectation for example of a swimming pool with regard to a tangible item, i.e. the pool itself, is difficult to conceive. It is however easy to understand poor performance, unpleasant conditions or a facility is closed for example. This is further compounded by the nature of involvement of the customer. They also are an integral part of the service. Exceeding customer requirements is therefore in part within the domain of the customer themselves, particularly if they are partaking in a self-imposed regime of fitness. Customers continuance to use the service is therefore in part, outside the control of the service provider, for this industry. In any event other work in this area has not been found to provide links with performance (Pitt and Jeantrout 1994). Expectations, and the management thereof will no doubt still be considered and evaluated in the literature within service industries. It would appear, that from the qualitative data of this study, and the nature of the service provision, this is not a dimension which would yield a useful function, either academically or from a management perspective.

#### **11.4.2 Customer Orientation**

Customer orientation does not have a construct of its own in the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model. Also, in the qualitative phase of this study this dimension (customer orientation) did not rate significantly within the interviews, either as an emphatic issue in the raw data, or as a theme. This is consistent with the Kohli and Jaworski

(1990) market orientation models but in contrast with earlier themes which termed in part market orientation as “close to the customer” (Shapiro 1988; Webster 1988).

#### **11.4.3 Total Quality Orientation**

In contrast to the results of this study, there has been recent work which extends the debate concerning dimensional constructs of marketing in the services arena from a base of “quality orientation”, which incorporates earlier work from a number of fields. This, theoretically is a logical progression, since marketing ideology, when present is usually considered as an operational component of a larger corporate or business strategy (Webster 1988), often seen competing with the other business disciplines (Lorenz 1986).

The basis of a quality orientation has its roots in TQM (total quality management), the key principles of which are customer focus, continuous improvement and teamwork (Dean and Bowen 1994). This suggests that there are several that are common, and further, many of these overlap with dimensions used to measure marketing orientation. In many situations, however, these relate to outcomes, which may not be a good indicator of the underlying processes involved. This revives some of the arguments that the measurement of “the process quality attributes” are insufficient to capture all of the service quality dimensional construct, since the “outcome quality attributes” are being ignored (Mangold and Babakus 1991; Richard and Allaway 1993).

The debate concerning the measurement of process or outcome with regard to the service quality dimensional construct is as yet, also unresolved. Therefore if the

objective is to come to an operationalisation of the total quality construct, the issue of teamwork raised by Dean and Bowen (1994), theoretically should not be overlooked, and this theme was in part supported by the qualitative phase of this study which provided the theme of “interfunctional coordination” as defined by the Narver and Slater (1990) model. Again an important issue particularly reported by the managers of local authority C. Key determined areas identified via a marketing plan were developed by various staff groups drawn from all areas of the organisation. This is testimony to the principle which was considered an important organisational approach with regard to delivering services.

The models of a Total Quality Orientation have yet to be effectively tested and replicated, but a major consideration is the common theme of customer satisfaction which appears in a number of works (Miles et al. 1995; Westbrook et al. 1996; Rapert and Babakus 1996; Mohr-Jackson 1998). Some have argued that despite this being a fundamentally sound principle, measurements of customer satisfaction are considered not to be especially informative or diagnostic (Peterson and Wilson 1992). A theme of customer satisfaction did not appear in the qualitative phase of this study, nor significantly in any of the individual interviews.

### **11.5 Link to Performance**

One of the major outputs of the market orientation and service quality measurement is the ability to link the data positively to performance related data. Because of the problems of profit and other derived measures, only income, expenditure and attendance figures are considered. Table 47 indicates that Case D shows the poorest

levels of income, the lowest attendance figures and the highest deficit level (income minus expenditure). This also extends to the ratio of income per customer which is the highest of the four cases, indicating a relatively low value for money return from a customer perspective. Limitations in this study however exist with regard to income and attendance over a single year period. Although not a longitudinal study, spurious changes may have affected these direct measures, which if evaluated over a longer time period may have provided a more stable view of these two criteria.

<b>Case A</b>	
Total Income for the previous financial year:	£1,339,359
Total Expenditure for previous financial year:	£1,366,424
Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators)	646,486
Financial Surplus/(-Deficit)	£ (27,065)
<b>Case B</b>	
Total Income for the previous financial year:	£1,618,754
Total Expenditure for previous financial year:	£1,626,100
Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators)	1,045,145
Financial Surplus/(-Deficit)	£ (7,346)
<b>Case C</b>	
Total Income for the previous financial year:	£2,198,990 **
Total Expenditure for previous financial year:	£2,346,430 **
Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators)	761,386*
Financial Surplus/(-Deficit)	£ (147,440)
* Figure for one centre estimated on four month attendance extrapolated to one year. (Centre opened in Feb 1999)	
** Figure based upon adjusted budget projections based upon previous year's actual, reduced by 3% to allow for inflation so figures are comparable against other authorities for last financial year.	
<b>Case D</b>	
Total Income for the previous financial year:	£ 779,889
Total Expenditure for previous financial year:	£ 972,413
Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators)	340,354
Financial Surplus/(-Deficit)	£ (192,524)

**Table 47 Financial and Attendance Data for Each Case.**

The only statistically significant tables are the Scheffe's test for the market orientation constructs which place Case D in the lowest category for all three elements of the dimensional construct of market orientation. The same cannot be said for the service quality constructs, which only returned as statistically valid two of the four constructs, although confirming the existence of all five. This is consistent with some studies in this area, in that service quality and performance are known to be related but the means of measuring this relationship appears to be somewhat elusive. Also consistent with the literature is the statistically significant return for the element "reliability", found to be the most important factor of all the dimensional constructs elements in the Parasuraman et al. (1991) study.

### **11.6 A Comprehensive Means Of Measuring The Market Orientation And Service Quality Construct Models.**

Recent attempts have been made to identify the relationship between this dimensional construct and market orientation, if one exists (Chang and Chen 1998; Caruana et al. 1999). These constructs are somewhat abstract and a difficulty arises in that any form of relationship is going to be complex. From a management perspective, the key issue arises in that there may not be a meaningful relationship between them at all, and that the elements of the dimensional constructs sit alongside each other.

The qualitative phase indicated that market orientation and marketing issues held the greatest proportion of responses. The market orientation quantitative study also indicated a link to performance for this data set. Whilst the literature has established in part the purported benefits and positive link to performance for both market orientation (Doyle 1992; Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Slater and Narver 1994; Wensley

1995; Van Egeren and O'Connor), and service quality (Rust et al. 1995; Caruana et al. 1999). Studies have also considered very complex relationships that exist between market orientation and service quality, (Chang and Chen 1998; van Egeren and O'Connor 1998). These have not been conclusive however and have not had sufficient time to be replicated in the literature to determine the level of acceptance. These studies, considering the internal mechanisms of the relationship between these two major constructs however assume that there is a relationship that exists between the two constructs.

The qualitative phase of this study would suggest that there is very little overlap. Although intuitively it would be expected that managers, if they were attempting to improve market orientation, they would also attempt to achieve this for service quality. There may be a case therefore that a relationship does not exist at all between the two constructs, and these two constructs merely sit beside each other, enabling management to manipulate them for the purposes of satisfying organisational objectives. For pragmatic purposes therefore there is a need to provide a means by which managers can determine a level of market orientation and service quality, and link some form of that measurement to performance. The method suggested as a result of this data set would be to use what has been effectively established in this study in terms of significant responses from the quantitative phase and place the appropriate questions within one measurement instrument. By using the elements which have shown only statistical significance, this would also resolve the issue of the duplication of the "responsiveness" elements in both the market orientation and service quality constructs, since only the market orientation "responsiveness" element would be used.

The next question is what would be the purpose of “cherry picking” the appropriate elements from the available dimensional constructs and placing them in one research tool? It would provide a composite view of market orientation and service quality, but the elements of the market orientation would be used to indicate a link to performance, whereas the service quality elements would indicate the “non-management” view of the service facility from a “tangible” and “reliability” perspective. Poor responses in terms of the market orientation constructs would indicate a linkage to poor financial performance. Poor response with regard to either or both “tangibles” or “reliability” measurements would indicate where management effort could be directed, in addition to the areas of the three elemental constructs of the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model construct. Therefore, only part of the response would be used to link to performance i.e. the elements of market orientation. It is not possible to determine at this stage the value of including dimensional constructs of “resources”, “competition” and “interfunctional co-ordination” because of validity and reliability issues for this industry.

With regard to the methodology adopted, significantly different is the use of front line staff to act as “surrogate customers” to obtain measurements for the market orientation constructs. The literature suggested that where repeated actions occur, strong role and script patterns of behaviour can be established by the customers, with the front line staff (Shrank and Abelson 1977; Booms and Bitner 1982). The results of this study would therefore indicate that front line staff are an appropriate source of information that will produce valid and reliable results.

It is therefore suggested, from the results of this data set, that the questions which provided statistically significant results be combined into one measurement instrument. This should comprise the elements of the dimensional construct for the market orientation Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model in conjunction to the questions which comprise the elements of the “tangibles” and “reliability” service quality construct of the Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) and that front line staff be incorporated into the process to obtain the “surrogate customer” viewpoint.



## **Chapter 12 PROPOSITION EVALUATION**

### **12.1 Introduction**

Chapters 9 and 10 document the research findings from the combined research design incorporating the case study research, and analysis of the quantitative survey data. The iterative process of removing elements of the survey instrument improved the reliability measurement via the Cronbach alpha scores. This produced two sets of elements which were subjected to principal component analysis using the Varimax rotation to determine the presence or otherwise of any underlying traits consistent with the literature with regard to the market orientation and service quality constructs. Such dimensions were found which could be considered comparable to that discovered in the literature. These dimensional constructs of market orientation and service quality were also subjected to multiple analysis of variance to determine if there were any statistically significant differences found between the four local authorities examined. This was found to be so for only some of the dimensions which compose the market orientation and service quality constructs, and this chapter evaluates these differences in relation to the hypotheses developed earlier in this thesis. This chapter evaluates the hypotheses developed, and other issues which have arisen in relation to this research.

The hypotheses developed in this thesis are as follows:

- H<sub>1</sub>** "MARKOR" is an appropriate model for measuring the construct of Market Orientation.
- H<sub>2</sub>** Public sector sport and recreation providers that indicate Market Orientation as measured by the "MARKOR" model perform better as indicated by direct measurements of income and attendance.
- H<sub>3</sub>** "SERVPERF" is appropriate for measuring the construct of Service Quality.

**H<sub>4</sub>** Public sector sport and recreation providers that indicate good service quality as measured by "SERVPERF", perform better as indicated by direct measurements of income and attendance.

## 12.2 Evaluation: Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>

**H<sub>1</sub>** "MARKOR" is an appropriate model for measuring the construct of Market Orientation.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
IG1	.387	.418	.334	.117	.102	.204
IG2	.650	.360	.119	-.114	-.094	.361
IG3	.699	.141	.309	.112	.236	.147
IG5	.812	.004	.056	.214	.029	.187
IG6	.583	-.170	.487	.126	.224	-.088
IG7	.241	.126	.176	.160	.163	.771
IG8	.187	.116	.243	.107	.163	.810
IG10	.436	.251	.300	.013	.291	.203
ID1	.143	.261	.692	-.080	.186	.120
ID2	.353	.252	.215	.045	.504	.350
ID3	.466	.281	.286	.016	.588	.284
ID4	.100	.069	.698	.152	.324	.253
ID5	.206	.209	.684	.208	.002	.211
ID6	.466	.367	.532	.282	.028	.057
R2	-.047	.139	.195	.123	.758	.154
R4	.149	.687	.264	.269	.232	.294
R6	.487	.523	.051	.045	.283	.332
R8	-.018	.851	.148	.121	.193	.061
R9	.336	.585	.191	.421	.043	.108
R10	-.015	.079	-.024	.847	.107	.284
R11	.363	.175	.146	.603	.363	.142
R12	.393	.344	.032	.320	.545	-.063
R13	.117	.320	.210	.772	-.018	-.085
R14	.096	.641	.174	.499	.258	.006

**Table 48 Principal Component Analysis of Market Orientation Elements.**

Table 48 shows the various market orientation elements which load under the factors 1 to 6. The market orientation construct (Kohli et al. 1993) consists of three major dimensions, intelligence gathering (IG1-10), intelligence dissemination (ID1-6) and responsiveness (R2-14). These six dimensions account for some 70.1% of the

variance, a relatively high value. Kline (1994) has suggested that “variance extracted” acts as a good method of providing an adequate measure of construct validity. This implies therefore that the greater the variance extracted via a model using this approach, a better measure results to describe the construct of market orientation. This value therefore represents a good indicator of construct validity for this data set.

Intelligence generation in this data set appears to consist of two dimensions, 1 and 6. Intelligence dissemination appears to consist of one dimension in this data set, whereas the responsiveness construct appears in this data set to consist of three dimensions, 2, 4 and 5. Intelligence generation. In the event, the elements IG3, IG5 and IG6 loaded under one construct (No. 4), and IG7, IG8 loaded under another (No. 2). The questions to which these refer are as follows:

**Elements which loaded above the threshold limit on Dimensional Construct No. 1**

- IG 2    Individuals from our development unit interact directly with customers to learn how to serve them better.
- IG 3    In this department, we do a lot of market research.
- IG 5    We poll end users at least once a year to assess the quality of our products and services.

**Elements which loaded above the threshold limit on Dimensional Construct No. 6**

- IG 7    We collect industry information by informal means (e.g., lunch with industry friends, talks with trade partners).
- IG 8    In our department, intelligence on our competitors is generated independently by several departments.

There appears to be a difference in the apparent perception of information that is obtained via market research and related activity (construct No. 1) and that of information about competitors and other industry information (construct No. 6). An extant review of the literature, particularly Kohli et al. (1993), Farrell and Oczkowski's (1998) studies do not identify such a division in this area, but consider

these under the single heading of intelligence generation. This may be characteristic of this type of service, different to that so far identified in the literature. The Narver and Slater (1990) construct however does contain an element “competitor orientation”. This is supported by the themed analysis in the qualitative stage, where this element appears within the themed analysis. This study also finds an anomaly in the respect of competitor orientation in that although it emerges in the themed analysis, information or intelligence is not systematically or routinely sought about competitors, moreover there is an “awareness” that competitors are present and they are a threat. This is in contrast with the concept of the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) model under the element of Intelligence Generation. It would appear therefore that in this study, the element of competitor orientation should be separated from the existing elements, and should form a construct in its own right, similar to the Narver and Slater (1990) model construct.

#### Intelligence Dissemination

The data under this heading (ID1 to ID 8) was expected to load under one dimensional construct. The results which can be seen on table 48 show that the elements ID1, ID4 and ID5 load onto one construct. For these elements this is consistent with the literature, particularly Kohli et al. (1993), Farrell and Oczkowski (1998).

#### Responsiveness

The elements for this construct shown on table 48 appear to load onto three separate dimensions. R4, R8 and R14 appear under heading No. 2, R10, R11 and R13 appear under heading No. 4 and R2 appears under No. 5.

#### **Elements Under Construct No. 2**

- R4 We periodically review our product development efforts to ensure that they are in line with what customers want.
- R8 If a major competitor were to launch an intensive campaign targeted at our customers, we would implement a response immediately
- R14 When we find that customers would like us to modify a product of the service, the departments involved make concerted efforts to do so.

#### **Elements Under Construct No. 4**

- R10 Customer complaints fall on deaf ears in this department.
- R11 Even if we came up with a great marketing plan, we probably would not be able to implement it in a timely fashion.
- R13 When we find out that customers are unhappy with the quality of our service, we take corrective action immediately.

#### **Elements Under Construct No. 5**

- R2 Principles of market segmentation drive new product development efforts in this business unit.

Elements under all three constructs can be seen to fall under the dimensional construct “Responsiveness” identified in the literature (Kohli et al. 1993). What is different is that these three groups have appeared rather than one. Those under heading No. 4 are negatively worded elements. Deng and Dart (1994) identified that in their scale purification process negatively worded items were eliminated due to respondent reaction. In addition, services marketing literature also identified that problems with negatively worded questions, and removal improved reliability (Babakus and Boller 1992; Babakus and Mangold 1992; Carman 1990). Later studies regarding market orientation also eliminate negatively worded statements confirming that their use may produce spurious results, despite being advocated as good design to eliminate respondent bias (Churchill 1979). Elements under constructs No. 2 and 4 could therefore be considered to be grouped together. The element under construct No. 5 appears to be different to the other two in that it refers to a marketing tool, whereas the others are more of a pragmatic approach. It is however a “responsiveness” item

and loads separately not because it is different to constructs 2 and 4, but that it appears to be perceived as a different type of responsiveness activity. All three dimensional constructs could therefore be considered to be under one generic heading of “responsiveness”. The qualitative phase of this study however provided support for two of the Narver and Slater (1990) elements, namely competitor orientation and interfunctional co-ordination, these achieving relatively high levels of response from the interviewees.

It is therefore concluded that the MARKOR measurement instrument using the restricted number of elements as identified using principal component analysis is an appropriate measure of the market orientation construct for this data set for the elements identified within the survey instrument. That is with the exception that an additional element of “competitor orientation” should be created, as a result of this data analysis.

**12.3 Evaluation: Hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>**

- H<sub>2</sub>** Public sector sport and recreation providers that indicate Market Orientation as measured by the “MARKOR” model perform better as indicated by direct measurements of income and attendance.

For this hypothesis, multiple analysis of variance was conducted to determine if any statistically significant differences existed, these are shown on the following tables. Initially, the intelligence dissemination and responsiveness constructs show a significant value with regard to the four local authorities. Further analysis revealed one local authority, D which was significantly different from the other three on all

dimensions of the market orientation constructs (see tables 44, 45 and 46). Review of the income and attendance figures on page 228 correlates with this difference of this local authority (D) in comparison to the other three.

Case		1	2
C	22	2.9602	
A	16	3.0078	
B	9	3.0972	
D	4		4.8438
Sig.		.996	1.000

Table 49 Intelligence Generation: Significance Test

Case		1	2
C	22	2.6894	
A	16	2.7917	
B	9	3.5185	
D	4		5.7500
Sig.		.557	1.000

Table 50 Intelligence Dissemination: Significance Test

Case		1	2
C	22	2.3773	
A	16	2.7000	
B	9	2.8444	
D	4		4.9000
Sig.		.814	1.000

Table 51 Responsiveness: Significance Test

<b>Case A</b>	
Total Income for the previous financial year:	£1,339,359
Total Expenditure for previous financial year:	£1,366,424
Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators)	646,486
Financial Surplus/(-Deficit)	£ (27,065)
<b>Case B</b>	
Total Income for the previous financial year:	£1,618,754
Total Expenditure for previous financial year:	£1,626,100
Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators)	1,045,145
Financial Surplus/(-Deficit)	£ (7,346)
<b>Case C</b>	
Total Income for the previous financial year:	£2,198,990 **
Total Expenditure for previous financial year:	£2,346,430 **
Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators)	761,386*
Financial Surplus/(-Deficit)	£ (147,440)
* Figure for one centre estimated on four month attendance extrapolated to one year. (Centre opened in Feb 1999)	
** Figure based upon adjusted budget projections based upon previous year's actual, reduced by 3% to allow for inflation so figures are comparable against other authorities for last financial year.	
<b>Case D</b>	
Total Income for the previous financial year:	£ 779,889
Total Expenditure for previous financial year:	£ 972,413
Total attendances for previous financial year (excluding spectators)	340,354
Financial Surplus/(-Deficit)	£ (192,524)

The deficit value in comparison to the attendances recorded indicates a very significant difference for local authority D in relation to the other three. The qualitative phase of the research indicated that this authority had recently been in difficulty in that the operational contractor had gone into receivership. The facilities as a result had been managed in the short term by an in house department pending reorganisation. Resultant organisational changes, identified in the interviews, indicated that almost all decision making other than within prescribed budgets had been removed from the managers, and marketing policies such as pricing were made by committee on an annual basis. This approach is very similar to that observed by Cowell (1979), which was indicated at the time as being problematic, and did not



make best use of resources. This is confirmed by this study in that local authority D has the highest deficit and the lowest attendance levels. Ratios of income, expenditure and attendance provide some comparison.

<i>Case</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>
Income per customer (£)	2.07	1.54	1.23	2.29
Expenditure per customer (£)	2.11	1.55	3.08	2.86

**Table 52 Comparative Income/Expenditure Statistics**

Table 52 shows the relative values per customer for income and expenditure. Case D is notable in that its income per head is the highest of the four, and yet the qualitative phase indicated that the facilities and product/service provision was the oldest and of poorest quality. In comparison to the others however, expenditure is not the lowest, indicating a poor use of resources when compared with the qualitative data of all four cases. The quantitative stage placed case D in the lowest category for all dimensions, which was also consistent with the qualitative phase of the enquiry. The total number of attendances for case D was also the lowest of all four cases reviewed.

Based upon the statistical significance of this test, in that local authority D is rated very poorly, and that the other sources of information indicate better performance measured by their lower deficit values, hypothesis 2 is, for this test alone confirmed. This does not however imply a performance link with market orientation, since the differences observed between the other authorities were not statistically significant.

### 12.4 Evaluation: Hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>

This hypothesis relates to the services quality section of the quantitative section of this study, and is based upon the SERVPERF performance evaluation model of Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994).

**H<sub>3</sub>** “SERVPERF” is appropriate for measuring the construct of Service Quality.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
SQ1	.103	-.024	.139	.775	.081	-.086
SQ2	.307	-.128	.189	.782	-.044	.217
SQ3	.166	.159	-.025	.264	.064	.777
SQ4	.017	.156	.101	.728	-.018	.384
SQ5	.672	.223	.083	.218	-.138	.346
SQ6	.498	.163	.494	.158	.067	.184
SQ7	.805	.217	.136	.087	.074	-.056
SQ8	.622	-.014	.063	.039	-.018	.538
SQ9	.591	.149	.002	.205	.429	.035
SQ11	-.114	.301	.213	-.073	.645	.450
SQ12	.457	-.130	.230	-.324	.564	.159
SQ13	.067	.119	.093	.103	.863	-.108
SQ14	.089	.797	.107	.020	.067	.073
SQ15	.065	.669	.143	-.170	.004	.178
SQ16	.308	.767	.108	.052	.182	-.005
SQ18	.133	.002	.825	.091	.142	.014
SQ19	-.022	.191	.854	.098	.017	-.016
SQ20	.197	.259	.486	.173	.158	.040
SQ21	.475	.426	.325	.141	.316	-.127

**Table 53 SERVPERF: Rotated Components Matrix**

The iterative removal of question elements due to low Cronbach alpha reliability scores resulted in 19 elements of the original 22 being retained. These are shown in table 53, alongside the principal component analysis (Varimax rotated) correlation scores.

**(a) Elements SQ1, 2, 3 and 4.**

From table 53 it can be seen that elements SQ1, SQ2 and SQ4 load onto dimension 4, whereas SQ3 loads onto dimension 6. The questions to which these elements refer are shown on table 54:

**Tangibles**

SQ 1:	This centre generally has up to date equipment.
SQ 2:	This centre's physical facilities are visually appealing.
SQ 3:	This centre's staff are well dressed and appear neat.
SQ 4:	The appearance of the physical facilities of this centre is in keeping with the type of service provided.

**Table 54 SERVPERF Dimension Questions: Tangibles**

Three of the questions refer to physical items, whereas SQ 3 refers to staff. It would appear therefore that although this construct does refer to tangible items, there is a perceptual difference of the “tangibles” in terms of equipment/physical facilities as one construct (SQ1, SQ2, SQ4), and another (SQ3) relating to staff. This latter construct can still be construed as a “tangible”, but the difference as viewed by the respondents between physical assets/facilities and staff is not unexpected. The questions listed under each of the constructs are listed as follows (SQ3 is listed under tangibles):

Tangibles		Reliability		Responsiveness		Assurance		Empathy	
SQ1	*	SQ5	*	SQ10		SQ14	*	SQ18	*
SQ2	*	SQ6		SQ11	*	SQ15	*	SQ19	*
SQ3	*	SQ7	*	SQ12	*	SQ16	*	SQ20	
SQ4	*	SQ8	*	SQ13	*	SQ17		SQ21	
		SQ9	*					SQ22	

Table 55 \* Elements Of The SERVPERF Model Identified after Principal Component Analysis.

It is therefore concluded, that as a result of these reliability and validity tests, and factor analysis the SERVPERF model is an adequate measure of service quality for this data set using the restricted range of elements for this service industry.

### 12.5 Evaluation: Hypothesis H<sub>4</sub>

This hypothesis considers the performance of the local authorities in this study in relation to the dimensional constructs of service quality.

- H<sub>4</sub> Public sector sport and recreation providers that indicate good service quality as measured by “SERVPERF”, perform better as indicated by direct measurements of income and attendance.

**(a) Multiple Analysis of Variance Analysis**

The service quality data set was subject to a multiple analysis of variance to identify whether any statistically significant relationships could be found against the four different local authorities. The results are shown in table 56 and significant differences were found for the dimensional constructs of 1 and 4 which correspond to the dimensional constructs of “reliability” and “tangibles” respectively.

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
Q58	REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	6.728	.000
	REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	2.105	.107
	REGR factor score 3 for analysis 1	.597	.619
	REGR factor score 4 for analysis 1	15.382	.000
	REGR factor score 5 for analysis 1	1.556	.208
	REGR factor score 6 for analysis 1	.860	.466

**Table 56 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Service Quality Constructs .**

The average values for the elements for each local authority across each of the five SERVPERF dimensional constructs are shown on table 57. A post hoc test of differences (Scheffe's test) was conducted to identify if any significant differences existed between the four local authorities for the dimensional constructs established for this data set. The results are shown on table 58 and 59. Significant differences at the .05 level were found for factor 1 (reliability), in which local authority B was found to be separated from the remaining three, and factor 4 (tangibles) in which local authority D was found to be significantly different from the other local authorities.

Dependent Variable	Case	Mean	Std. Error
Tangibles	A	2.645	.259
	D	5.156	.399
	B	3.574	.274
	C	2.298	.203
Reliability	A	2.379	.204
	D	3.275	.314
	B	3.518	.215
	C	2.026	.159
Responsiveness	A	2.439	.293
	D	2.208	.452
	B	2.549	.310
	C	1.860	.230
Assurance	A	2.228	.222
	D	2.042	.343
	B	2.667	.235
	C	1.882	.174
Empathy	A	2.461	.292
	D	2.437	.450
	B	3.132	.309
	C	2.016	.229

Table 57 Average Values: Elements of the SERVPERF Construct

AUTHORITY		1	2	3
LA-C	31	2.2984		
LA-A	19	2.6447	2.6447	
LA-B	17		3.5735	
LA-D	8			5.1563
Sig.		.873	.179	1.000

Table 58 Scheffe's Test: Construct "Tangibles"

AUTHORITY		1	2	3
LA-C	31	2.0258		
LA-A	19	2.3789	2.3789	
LA-D	8		3.2750	3.2750
LA-B	17			3.5176
Sig.		.758	.064	.906

Table 59 Scheffe's Test: Construct "Reliability"

The results indicate that these two dimensional constructs each segregate into three subgroups for both constructs, "tangibles" and "reliability". For the "tangibles" construct, the order of level was Local authority C and A in subgroup 1, local authority A and B in sub-group 2, and local authority D in the third and final group. For the "reliability" construct, the order of level was local authorities A and C in subgroup 1, local authorities A and D in subgroup 2, and local authority B in the third

and final group. The greater value scores indicate a lower position (original scale value 1 to 7). The values for each construct however are wider for the tangibles construct indicating a wider perception of difference. The other dimensional constructs did not indicate any significant differences in the values returned.

### **“Tangibles” Construct**

The two extreme local authorities are perhaps the better indicators of this dimensional construct result. Local Authority D rates the lowest, the facilities being described in the qualitative stage as being “old, and in need of considerable maintenance”. Local authority C on the other hand has been embarking on a refurbishment and rebuild programme for the previous two years, and due to finish in three to five years time valued at some £22 million. Clearly this would give local authority C an advantage in providing a service in “Excellent” facilities. Local authorities A and B have also been embarking on refurbishment programmes, but not to the same degree as local authority C, but certainly in a better position than local authority D which has not, and is not currently undergoing any form of refurbishment programme. The high level of tangible materials necessary for this type of provision enables this element to be identified as important and useful when positioning the service from a marketing perspective (Flipo 1988).

These results however also produced one element under the “tangibles” construct in a separate dimension which related to the staff of the centre. Significant resource was devoted from the marketing budget head for staff uniforms, and this coupled with the

NVQ training programme would provide a very “tangible” presence of staff in a facility.

### **“Reliability” Construct**

The qualitative stage of the research provides easily an explanation for local authority D rating the lowest of all the group. The facilities are reported as being old, (mid 1960’s), and some of which are shut due to maintenance problems. Similarly for the reliability dimensional construct, reports of significant difficulties may be a reflection of this measured value. Local authority B however is not such a facility, albeit not new, but reliability values are the lowest for this case. Interviews with managers however indicate a keenness and motivation, but serious problems were reported with regard to communications to staff and implementing programmes. Such difficulties cannot also be attributed to organisational or bureaucratic problems. This case (B) had one, albeit very large single facility as its provision for sport and recreation.

Local authority C however is rated the most highly with regard to reliability, and this organisation was emphatic about staff meetings, communication and the considerable resources devoted to the issue of internal communications and the ability to keep staff “up to date” constantly about the service provision. Provision of adequate and capable staff was also reported in local authority C as being of prime importance, and the relationship of staff with the organisation as being a beneficial “partnership”. All staff in this local authority were participants of a personal NVQ programme, which was seen by the managers as beneficial to both, providing the staff with a recognised and transportable qualification whilst it provided the opportunity for the organisation to

customise training programmes suitable to the needs of the service. Managers are all also keenly dynamic, with hands on approach, very aware of the service provision in their facilities.

## 12.6 Summary

This thesis has set out to test the following Hypotheses:

**H<sub>1</sub>** “MARKOR” is an appropriate model for measuring the construct of Market Orientation.

**H<sub>2</sub>** public sector sport and recreation providers that indicate Market Orientation as measured by the “MARKOR” model perform better as indicated by direct measurements of income and attendance.

**H<sub>3</sub>** “SERVPERF” is appropriate for measuring the construct of Service Quality.

**H<sub>4</sub>** public sector sport and recreation providers that indicate good service quality as measured by “SERVPERF”, perform better as indicated by direct measurements of income and attendance.

H<sub>1</sub> is supported with the caveat that there are fewer elements, and in addition to the three dimensions, additional ones are proposed to account for “competition” and “interfunctional coordination”.

H<sub>2</sub> is also supported in that one of the cases which reports marketing very poorly and ranks the lowest from the tests undertaken. These measurements of market orientation are therefore significant “in extreme”, i.e. where relatively large differences exist.



H<sub>3</sub> is also supported, also with the caveat that there are fewer elements within each dimension, and only two constructs show significance, “tangibles” and “reliability”. For the construct “tangibles”, it is further divided to account for the “people” providing the process and the “physical tangibles” which provide the environment for this service.

H<sub>4</sub> is only supported via two of the constructs (tangibles and reliability), which show significant differences in the quantitative study. For the “tangibles” construct, this is clearly validated by the other measures for all of the four cases, particularly between the two extreme cases. With regard to reliability, the major issue of the two cases which rated together in the lowest sub-group was communication, and this was cited as a major management difficulty. This hypothesis is also significant “in extreme”, i.e. where relatively large differences exist.

## **Chapter 13 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME**

### **13.1 Market Orientation and Service Quality Constructs**

Business success depends upon customers. This issue has always driven academics and practitioners alike in an attempt to determine methods to measure the elusive construct of “marketing”. Early works enabled the identification, in terms of marketing, of “what to do”, but not “how to do it”. More recent studies attempted to consider the implementation of the marketing concept, which has now been generally accepted as “market orientation”.

Work in this area has been prolific, but whilst the first types of industry to take advantage of marketing and related techniques were product industries, service industries which are now a significant proportion of the industrialised developed countries, did not appear to embrace the techniques of marketing with such alacrity. This has not been the case however in the last 30 years where work in both the marketing and service quality arenas have been prolific.

Early works were significantly influenced by a seemingly simple concept, that the customer was important, and all areas of an organisation should be directed towards that effort. The next logical step would be to measure the views of the customer, either from the perspective of the customers’ themselves (customer satisfaction, expectation, perception etc.), or from the view of the providing organisation (customer orientation) as viewed by the customer. Although some very sophisticated models have been produced in an attempt to measure a range of related concepts, a

number of camps have evolved all claiming to have the valid, reliable and appropriate measurement instrument, and challenging other works in the area. This has resulted in a plethora of works, none of which appear to achieve a consensus opinion. It would appear also that the complex customer is not the correct group to ask for their views about service quality. Other issues arise with regard to empirical studies, in that managers self reporting can be biased, particularly when reporting issues of performance.

It is only in the last 10 years (post 1990) that an attempt has been made to articulate a more scientific method to evaluate and measure the implementation of the marketing concept, or the market orientation of an organisation. In contrast to this, despite the claimed “slower” adoption of marketing in the services industry, attempts to articulate a service quality construct appeared in the literature some five years earlier. Attempts have been made to link both constructs with performance of organisations. Market Orientation constructs have however been more successful in this respect than studies comparing service quality and organisational performance.

It is only in the latter part of the 1990’s attempts have been made to consider both constructs of market orientation and service quality via a scientific method, mostly in an attempt to determine the nature of the relationship between them. They have assumed however that a relationship does exist, and studies have provided some very complex models to verify such propositions. No studies have however started out with the concept of this study that perhaps little or no relationship exists between the two

as far as the constructs of market orientation and service quality are concerned, and attempted to measure these against the criteria of organisational performance.

The next issue was to consider an appropriate means to obtain the necessary data. Front line staff have been reported, in some works to be an effective source of information about customers. This applies particularly in service industries when high levels of repeat custom occur, and habitual roles are established by the customer. Front line staff, it would appear, tend to have a better grasp of the reality of the service provision, mostly because they are present at its delivery. Managers on the other hand are not likely to be present for the exchange of the service provision, since it would be assumed that they would be usually “managing”, normally away from the location of the service provision.

This data set provided a good fit overall with regard to Kohli and Jaworski (1990) market orientation construct models, and the Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) performance measurement for the service quality construct. These are not however without caveats.

Some of the questions in both dimensional constructs were removed by the iterative process to improve the statistical Cronbach alpha scores. Whether these questions should be removed permanently, or if their removal was due to “statistical noise” in this data set can only be determined by further work in this area. What is significant however is that the dimensions were confirmed for both constructs.

The link to performance and the Market Orientation construct has been reasonably well established now in the literature, and this data set confirms a linkage to performance, albeit due to an error outside of the control of the researcher in the case selection method. It enabled one authority to be identified, which is performing very poorly against three others which are performing apparently well. Statistically significant results were identified across all three dimensions of the market orientation constructs.

The same however cannot be said to exist for the service quality construct examined in this study. Only two of the dimensions presented statistically significant results, the elements of "reliability" and "tangibles", and the cases identified at either extremes were not correlated with performance for the element of "reliability", but were for "tangibles". The link to performance is therefore not shown clearly in this data set.

The qualitative phase however did indicate problems for the two cases that indicated poor reliability problems. These were attributed to difficult communications by interviewed respondents; but it was also noted that these two authorities were not as vigorous as the two cases which achieved the higher scores, for example in their emphasis towards continued meetings with staff, or the training, or the drive to achieve the ISO 9000, 9002 and Investors in People Award. In comparison therefore, this measurement instrument does present a useful management indicator for the element of "reliability". The range of values being from 2.02 to 3.51, although it was statistically significant across three sub-groups for four cases, this measurement would appear to be reasonably sensitive.

For the element of “tangibles” for the extremes of cases (C and D), whilst one case had extensive rebuilding programmes, costing some millions of pounds set over a number of years, case D did not have such a programme, and interviewees reported difficulties over maintenance items. This also is a useful management indicator, noting also that the range of values for this element was the highest of all, values at each extreme being 2.29 and 5.15 respectively. Significant on a 1 to 7 scale range.

An interesting issue to arise from the data analysis is the possibility that staff are perceived as tangibles, but differently to the physical facilities. These questions appearing on separate but discrete dimensions in the quantitative study via principal component analysis. In hindsight, this is an obvious distinction to draw but one which has been commonly identified in the service quality arena. It is an issue however which would appear to benefit from further investigation, since a dimensional construct which segregates staff and physical facilities would be a useful management indicator.

Overall, the Kohli and Jaworski (1990) market orientation measurement instrument, and the Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) service quality measurement instrument for the elements of “reliability” and “tangibles”, combined have been found to correlate well in part with organisational performance (for market orientation) and other useful management indicators for service quality. The results of this study suggest therefore that this combined measurement instrument can be used, combined with a qualitative approach to determine an appropriate level of market orientation and service quality, linked in part to organisation performance with regard to market orientation. This is

new to this service and is considered a significant contribution to knowledge for public sector organisations to be able to measure service quality and market orientation, and link the latter construct to performance.

Market orientation and service quality are constructs which managers from this data set would appear to see as relatively different and distinct concepts, with little effective or meaningful relationship between them. Further work in this area will confirm or not, the generalisability of these conclusions to this, or similar service industries.

### **13.2 Methodological Issues**

This study consisted of two phases, initially an exploratory phase to select cases suitable for this study, followed by a combined research phase of a quantitative and qualitative phase. The first phase which used the Analytic Hierarchy Process was found to be successful in selecting suitable cases, but an unforeseen difficulty arose in that the company initially selected which operated the contract for the local authority went into receivership between the time of sending out the initial questionnaire and proceeding with the second phase. Although this was seen to be catastrophic at the time, the sport and recreation providers that were operating the facilities were doing so poorly from a marketing orientation, and service quality perspective. This therefore provided a useful perspective to compare against, which indicated a weakness in the research design. If all cases had been operating successfully, there would not have been perhaps the statistically significant results with which to compare the three effective cases.

The combined research design proved an effective approach to compare the quantitative study against. The emergent themes which arose as a result of the qualitative study indicated further dimensions which could be considered for both the constructs of market orientation and service quality, suggesting further additions to each. Academics may be competing for "the best measurement instrument", but it would appear that a combination of elements to form the dimensional constructs would be appropriate from the results of this data set.

Finally, the approach that this study has undertaken with regard to the quantitative measurement has been to obtain a view of "all of the staff", since they are considered a rich and valuable source of information, and developed a clear view from a customer perspective. This is often found under certain conditions in service industries (Bitner and Booms 1994). Much of the management action reported in this study was dependant upon a pluralistic approach in terms of information sources, coupled with effective communication. Much of the sources of information also were front line staff, in daily contact with large numbers of frequent repeat customers. Some studies have indicated that staff exhibit a "learning curve", being influenced by the customer that "actually helps to co-produce the service." (Schneider and Bowen 1993). Front line staff therefore would appear to be useful sources of information to determine market orientation and service quality values as determined by this data set. It would also appear that they do not suffer from the same "fatigue" problems that customers exhibit when completing questionnaires, enabling a longer, more comprehensive measurement instrument to be used.



The management issue subsequent to this is therefore about effective two way communication, reported by the local authority which came highest in the “reliability” dimensional construct as essential, and which devoted considerable resources to the enactment of it. The results from this data set indicate initially they are effective since the dimensional constructs for both the market orientation and service quality were in a large part confirmed. As a method for research, staff in a service industry where large numbers of repeat visits by customers occur, would appear to be a more reliable and valid source of data than customers themselves.

### **13.3 Limitations to this Research**

The combined design of this study has given an effective means whereby the quantitative phase of stage 2 could be effectively triangulated against the qualitative data. The strict boundaries of the quantitative stage 2 did not enable the quantitative measurement of the Narver and Slater (1990) market orientation constructs which appeared to emerge from the qualitative analysis of the interviewed respondents. Two of the dimensional constructs, competitor orientation and interfunctional co-ordination would appear to warrant consideration to be included within future studies, to determine the value, or not of their inclusion in the measurement instrument. The same can be said for the apparent dimensional construct of “resources” which also emerged in the qualitative phase.

Limitations also exist with regard to income and attendance over a single year period. Although not a longitudinal study, spurious changes may have affected these direct measures which evaluation over a longer time period may have provided a more stable view of these two criteria. Further studies may consider this aspect.

#### **13.4 Implications for Further Study.**

A measure, which is composed of a set number of dimensions and is generically applicable across all industries, from an extant review of the literature and this study appears to be a difficult objective to achieve. Certainly, dimensions appear which are consistent, but these were formed from a reduced set of elements which were determined by reliability measures. Future studies will consider the methodological foundations of these constructs, and whether or not differences are occurring due to the nature of the instruments being used, the contextual situation of the studies, or whether it is the respondents themselves causing the variations.

The results of this data set indicate that the element "responsiveness" of service quality is better served by the more widely defined market orientation element of "responsiveness". No doubt researchers in this area will question and evaluate the result found in this study.

Although a link to organisational performance was found for the market orientation construct, other dimensional elements which appeared in the qualitative analysis included two of the Narver and Slater elements (interfunctional co-ordination and competitor orientation), and a further construct "resources". Further work in this area will determine if it is appropriate to include this elements in the measurement instrument, and if the same link to performance can be achieved. It may be noted however that "resources" as a dimensional construct may be unique also to the Sport and Recreation Service Providers.

The concept of a “total quality orientation” which incorporates a number of other dimensional constructs, although a utopian ideal, from the results of this data set would appear to present considerable difficulties in being effectively replicated for this service area.

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## **APPENDICES**

- 1     Analytic Hierarchy Process questionnaire**
- 2     Market Orientation and Service Quality Questionnaire**
- 3     Themed Interview Responses**

**Analytic Hierarchy Process Questionnaire**

**Market Orientation and Service Quality**

**Questionnaire**

**Themed Interview Responses**



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**APPENDICES**

- 1     Analytic Hierarchy Process questionnaire**
- 2     Market Orientation and Service Quality Questionnaire**
- 3     Themed Interview Responses**



**Analytic Hierarchy Process Questionnaire**

Date: ref:



John Beaumont-Kerridge  
Senior Lecturer (Marketing)  
University of Luton  
Park Sq  
Luton  
Beds LU1 3JU

Phone: 0402 165 560  
Fax: 01582 450 500  
Pager: 0941 101 339

Dear

Re: Phd study, Marketing Process Survey.

Firstly, may I thank you for taking part in this survey concerning the above. It is the first of its type, and is intended to identify the effectiveness of the various marketing processes which occur within leisure departments, as applied to built facilities for sports provision.

What is needed, is for you to state for each of the pairs presented on the questionnaires attached, *your opinion* of how important you consider one marketing element to be over the other. The numeric scale ranges from 1 (neutral) to 9 (extreme difference).

The study should be able to identify initially:

- Marketing elements considered to be the most important by Heads of Leisure Services.
- What is the industry standard based upon the collective input..

The difference with this approach is the use of a technique called "Analytic Hierarchy Process", which holds that decisions are made in terms of hierarchies. The maths behind it is seriously boring, however it does enable the relationship of elements to be rated, and thereafter determine their perceived functionality. This has not been done before.

The questionnaire needs your instinctive thoughts rather than long contemplation and should only take about ten minutes to complete. Unfortunately, shortage of finance does not permit me to offer any reward other than a very warm thank you. If you would like a set of results however, could you please return the tear off slip below with the questionnaire.

Yours sincerely

John Beaumont-Kerridge

please tear along line

From:



Please send me a set of results of this study which includes a printout of:

- The results of MY questionnaire
- The results of the total input

PS. Please remember, when completing the questionnaires, this study applies only to built facilities for sports provision.

## EFFECTIVE MARKETING OF SPORTS FACILITIES

Compare the relative importance of each element in each pair

1=equal 3=moderate 5=strong 7=very strong 9=extreme

With respect to the overall effective marketing of Sports / Rec Centres

Which, in each pair below is more important:

Strategic marketing	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Strategic marketing planning
Strategic marketing	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing management
Strategic marketing planning	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing management

This is an example of how to complete page 1 of the questionnaire.

### *This example reads:*

- Strategic marketing is moderately more important than Strategic marketing planning (3, left of centre)
- Strategic marketing is strongly more important than marketing management (5, left of centre)
- Strategic marketing planning is moderately more important than marketing management (3, left of centre)

The remaining pages except the last (page 5) follow the same principle as above. The final page contains descriptions (if needed) of the terms used.

Please note, all questions apply to built facilities that provide wet and/or dry sports programmes.

EFFECTIVE MARKETING OF SPORTS FACILITIES

Compare the relative importance of each element in each pair  
1=equal 3=moderate 5=strong 7=very strong 9=extreme

With respect to the overall *effective marketing* of Sports / Rec Centres  
Which, in each pair below is more important:

Strategic marketing	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Strategic marketing planning
Strategic marketing	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing management
Strategic marketing planning	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing management

Please note, that the importance of each element in a pair on:  
(this page) is with respect to overall effective marketing  
(this page) is with respect to strategic marketing,  
(this page) is with respect to strategic marketing planning,  
(this page) is with respect to marketing management.  
This page asks for some basic information about the sports centres in your authority.  
The back page contains some explanations of the terms used.

Please complete pages 1 to 5  
(including this one)

# EFFECTIVE MARKETING OF SPORTS FACILITIES

Compare the relative importance of each element in each pair

1=equal 3=moderate 5=strong 7=very strong 9=extreme

Page 2 of 5

With respect to the overall *Strategic Marketing* of Sports Centres

Which in each pair below is more important:

Planning method of the Council for strategy formation.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Planning ahead against future uncertainty
Planning method of the Council for strategy formation.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Proactive planning of sports programmes
Planning method of the Council for strategy formation.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Pressures resulting in the reactive planning of sports programmes
Planning method of the Council for strategy formation.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Decision making efficiency of Directorate via Council Committee
Planning method of the Council for strategy formation.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Analytical tool used: Ansoff matrix
Planning method of the Council for strategy formation.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Objectives set by Leisure Directorate
Planning method of the Council for strategy formation.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Council members political ethos
Planning method of the Council for strategy formation.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Synergy between Council depts
Planning against future uncertainty	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Proactive planning of sports programmes
Planning against future uncertainty	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Pressures resulting in the reactive planning of sports programmes
Planning against future uncertainty	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Decision making efficiency of Directorate via Council Committee
Planning against future uncertainty	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Analytical tool used: Ansoff matrix
Planning against future uncertainty	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Objectives set by Leisure Directorate
Planning against future uncertainty	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Council members political ethos
Planning against future uncertainty	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Synergy between Council depts
Proactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Pressures resulting in the reactive planning of sports programmes
Proactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Decision making efficiency of Directorate via Council Committee
Proactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Analytical tool used: Ansoff matrix
Proactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Objectives set by Leisure Directorate
Proactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Council members political ethos
Proactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Synergy between Council depts
Pressures resulting in the reactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Decision making efficiency of Directorate via Council Committee
Pressures resulting in the reactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Analytical tool used: Ansoff matrix
Pressures resulting in the reactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Objectives set by Leisure Directorate
Pressures resulting in the reactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Council members political ethos
Pressures resulting in the reactive planning of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Synergy between Council depts
Decision making efficiency of Directorate via Council Committee	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Analytical tool used: Ansoff matrix
Decision making efficiency of Directorate via Council Committee	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Objectives set by Leisure Directorate
Decision making efficiency of Directorate via Council Committee	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Council members political ethos
Decision making efficiency of Directorate via Council Committee	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Synergy between Council depts
Analytical tool used: Ansoff matrix	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Objectives set by Leisure Directorate
Analytical tool used: Ansoff matrix	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Council members political ethos
Analytical tool used: Ansoff matrix	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Synergy between council depts.
Objectives set by Leisure Directorate	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Council members political ethos
Objectives set by Leisure Directorate	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Synergy between Council depts
Council members political ethos	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Synergy between Council depts

# EFFECTIVE MARKETING OF SPORTS FACILITIES

Compare the relative importance of each element in each pair

1=equal 3=moderate 5=strong 7=very strong 9=extreme

Page 3 of 5

With respect to the *Strategic Marketing Planning* of Sports Centres

Which in each pair below is more important:

Energy between management levels internal to the dept.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Staff marketing planning skills and knowledge
Energy between management levels internal to the dept.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing orientation of directorate
Energy between management levels internal to the dept.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Specific goal measurement of sports programmes
Energy between management levels internal to the dept.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Matching dept strengths / opportunities
Energy between management levels internal to the dept.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Identification of weaknesses / threats
Energy between management levels internal to the dept.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing research
Energy between management levels internal to the dept.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing information
Energy between management levels internal to the dept.	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Allocation of resources to match identified market opportunities
Staff marketing planning skills and knowledge	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing orientation of directorate
Staff marketing planning skills and knowledge	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Specific goal measurement of sports programmes
Staff marketing planning skills and knowledge	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Matching dept strengths / opportunities
Staff marketing planning skills and knowledge	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Identification of weaknesses / threats
Staff marketing planning skills and knowledge	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing research
Staff marketing planning skills and knowledge	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing information
Staff marketing planning skills and knowledge	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Allocation of resources to match identified market opportunities
Marketing orientation of directorate	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Specific goal measurement of sports programmes
Marketing orientation of directorate	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Matching dept strengths / opportunities
Marketing orientation of directorate	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Identification of weaknesses / threats
Marketing orientation of directorate	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing research
Marketing orientation of directorate	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing information
Marketing orientation of directorate	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Allocation of resources to match identified market opportunities
Specific goal measurement of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Matching dept strengths / opportunities
Specific goal measurement of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Identification of weaknesses / threats
Specific goal measurement of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing research
Specific goal measurement of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing information
Specific goal measurement of sports programmes	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Allocation of resources to match identified market opportunities
Matching dept strengths / opportunities	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Identification of weaknesses / threats
Matching dept strengths / opportunities	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing research
Matching strengths and opportunities	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing information
Matching dept strengths / opportunities	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Allocation of resources to match identified market opportunities
Identification of weaknesses / threats	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing research
Identification of weaknesses / threats	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing information
Identification of weaknesses / threats	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Allocation of resources to match identified market opportunities
Marketing research	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Marketing information
Marketing research	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Allocation of resources to match identified market opportunities
Marketing information	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Allocation of resources to match identified market opportunities

# EFFECTIVE MARKETING OF SPORTS FACILITIES

Compare the relative importance of each element in each pair  
1=equal 3=moderate 5=strong 7=very strong 9=extreme

Page 4 of 5

With respect to the Marketing Management of Sports Centres

Which in each pair below is more important:

Range of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Price of product / service
Range of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Promotion of product / service
Range of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Location of built facilities
Range of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Quality of product / service provision
Range of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Customer experience of product/services
Range of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Competitor products / services
Range of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Clarity of target segmentation to identified products / services
Range of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Flexibility of staff to respond to changing consumer needs
Pricing of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Promotion of product / service
Pricing of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Location of built facilities
Pricing of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Quality of product / service provision
Pricing of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Customer experience of product/services
Pricing of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Competitor products / services
Pricing of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Clarity of target segmentation to identified products / services
Pricing of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Flexibility of staff to respond to changing consumer needs
Promotion of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Location of built facilities
Promotion of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Quality of product / service provision
Promotion of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Customer experience of product/services
Promotion of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Competitor products / services
Promotion of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Clarity of target segmentation to identified products / services
Promotion of products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Flexibility of staff to respond to changing consumer needs
Location of built facilities	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Quality of product / service provision
Location of built facilities	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Customer experience of product/services
Location of built facilities	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Competitor products / services
Location of built facilities	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Clarity of target segmentation to identified products / services
Location of built facilities	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Flexibility of staff to respond to changing consumer needs
Quality of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Customer experience of product/services
Quality of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Competitor products / services
Quality of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Clarity of target segmentation to identified products / services
Quality of product / service provision	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Flexibility of staff to respond to changing consumer needs
Customer experience of product/services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Competitor products / services
Customer experience of product/services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Clarity of target segmentation to identified products / services
Customer experience of product/services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Flexibility of staff to respond to changing consumer needs
Competitor products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Clarity of target segmentation to identified products / services
Competitor products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Flexibility of staff to respond to changing consumer needs
Clarity of target segmentation to identified products / services	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Flexibility of staff to respond to changing consumer needs

*Could you please also provide the following brief information*

- Q1 How many combined wet and dry sports centres does the authority have?.....
- Q2 How many centres that provide dry sports only does your authority have?.....
- Q3 How many centres that contain swimming pools only (and no dry sports provision) does your authority have?.....
- Q4 Approximately how many full time equivalents staff (including centres operated under CCT) does your Leisure department have?.....
- Q5 Is your Leisure department      a) A department with a chief officer in its own right?.....
- b) or, part of another department?.....
- Q6 What is the approximate total income of the sports and recreation centres given in Q1-Q3?
- Q7 What is the approx. total expenditure of the sports and recreation centres given in Q1-Q3?

*Dear*

*Thank you very much for your help in this study.*

*John Beaumont-Kerridge*



## EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED.

<b>Strategic Marketing</b>	<b>Strategic Marketing Planning</b>	<b>Marketing Management</b>
<p><b>Managerial and operational activities required to create and sustain effective and efficient marketing strategies</b></p> <p><b>Planning Method Of The Department For Strategy Formation.</b> This refers to the effect of the system of planning of the department to develop the appropriate strategy to effectively provide products and services of the department.</p> <p><b>Planning Against Future Uncertainty</b> This activity is intended to overcome future problems due to uncertainty.</p> <p><b>Proactive Planning Of Sports Programmes.</b> This is a method, as a head office activity, which anticipates change rather than waits to react.</p> <p><b>Pressures Resulting In The Reactive Planning Of Sports Programmes.</b> This is a method, as a head office activity, which reacts to change rather than makes changes.</p> <p><b>Decision Making Efficiency Of Directorate Via Council Committees.</b> How effective in terms of efficiency is the decision making for the department via various Council Committees.</p> <p><b>Analytical Tools Used: Ansoff Matrix</b> This considers the provision of the product and market. These are each then divided into two further categories of "existing" and "new". Its purpose is to clearly identify the existing aspects from new ones, which helps in decision making.</p> <p><b>Objectives Set By Leisure Directorate</b> These are the operational objectives of the department determined by head office.</p> <p><b>Council Members Political Ethos</b> This is the political complexion of the council, and its effect on the delivery of services.</p> <p><b>Synergy Between Council Departments</b> This refers to the other departments of Council, and whether they "get on" with this department.</p>	<p><b>1 Strategic Marketing Planning</b> Develops the broad marketing objectives and strategy based upon an analysis of the current market situation and opportunities.</p> <p><b>2 Synergy Between Management Levels</b> This refers to the "do the managers between each level get on with each other" factor.</p> <p><b>3 Staff Marketing Planning Skills / Knowledge</b> This refers to the ability of staff to have the available skill and knowledge of marketing planning techniques to the advantage of the department.</p> <p><b>4 Marketing Orientation of Directorate.</b> This is the orientation of the head office in terms of their approach to the marketing operations of the department</p> <p><b>5 Specific Goal Measurement</b> This refers to the clarity of the products and services provided, and how their use is measured.</p> <p><b>6 Matching of Organisation's Strengths and Opportunities</b> To gain and maintain the best advantage, the matching of organisational strengths against the available opportunities.</p> <p><b>7 Effective identification of organisations Weaknesses and Threats</b> Avoiding the pitfalls of weaknesses of the organisation and the outside threats which might cause detriment or prevent product / service operation or take up.</p> <p><b>8 Marketing Research</b> The use of marketing research focuses the organisation towards its intended customer targets.</p> <p><b>9 Marketing Information</b> Information about customers is essential for a marketing orientation. This type of information comes from computerised ticket sales systems and gives valuable indications of customer usage trends.</p> <p><b>10 Allocation Of Resources To Match Identified Market Opportunities.</b> As well as finance, the deployment of staff and all other items that would be considered "resources".</p>	<p><b>1 Marketing Management</b> The process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organisational goals.</p> <p><b>2 Range of Product/Service provision</b> This is the individual product or service that the customer buys. e.g. swim, squash.</p> <p><b>3 Price of Products / Services</b> This is the actual price of the individual product or service purchased. It does not include the monies paid by individuals in rates.</p> <p><b>4 Promotion of Products and Services</b> This includes the advertising, leafletting and all other methods of communication of the products and services provided.</p> <p><b>5 Location of Built Facilities</b> This refers to the geographical situation of the built facilities in relation to the intended target groups for whom the products and services are provided.</p> <p><b>6 Quality of Product / Service Provision</b> This refers to the quality of products and services, and the facilities in which they are provided.</p> <p><b>7 Customer Experience</b> This is an indirect measure of the emphasis the organisation and its staff places upon customers, for example in dealing with customer complaints.</p> <p><b>8 Competitor Products / Services</b> This refers to the provision of products and services, and the level of consideration given to competitors that may take customers away.</p> <p><b>9 Clarity of Target Segmentation to Identified Products and Services</b> This refers to how the department defines its customers in terms of identifiable characteristics e.g. age, employment.</p> <p><b>10 Flexibility of Staff to Respond to Changing Consumer Needs</b> This refers to the ability of the department to reorganise its resources to adapt to changes required by changes in consumer demands.</p>

**Market Orientation and Service Quality Questionnaire**

## Market Orientation and Service Quality in a Leisure Setting

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. When considering your responses, please note that the reply is YOUR VIEW of others in the centre, and NOT your view about yourself.

In this department, we meet our customers regularly to find out what products or services they will need in the future.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE..... ☐  
2..... ☐  
3..... ☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE..... ☐  
5..... ☐  
6..... ☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE..... ☐  
8 DON'T KNOW..... ☐

Individuals from our development unit interact directly with customers to learn how to serve them better.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE..... ☐  
2..... ☐  
3..... ☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE..... ☐  
5..... ☐  
6..... ☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE..... ☐  
8 DON'T KNOW..... ☐

In this department, we do a lot of market research.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE..... ☐  
2..... ☐  
3..... ☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE..... ☐  
5..... ☐  
6..... ☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE..... ☐  
8 DON'T KNOW..... ☐

Q4 We are slow to detect changes in our customers' product preferences.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE..... ☐  
2..... ☐  
3..... ☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE..... ☐  
5..... ☐  
6..... ☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE..... ☐  
8 DON'T KNOW..... ☐

Q5 We poll end users at least once a year to assess the quality of our products and services.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE..... ☐  
2..... ☐  
3..... ☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE..... ☐  
5..... ☐  
6..... ☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE..... ☐  
8 DON'T KNOW..... ☐

Q6 We often talk with or survey those who can influence our end users' purchases. (e.g. local groups, community activity information centres).

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE..... ☐  
2..... ☐  
3..... ☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE..... ☐  
5..... ☐  
6..... ☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE..... ☐  
8 DON'T KNOW..... ☐

Q7 We collect industry information by informal means (e.g., lunch with industry friends, talks with trade partners).

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE..... ☐  
2..... ☐  
3..... ☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE..... ☐  
5..... ☐  
6..... ☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE..... ☐  
8 DON'T KNOW..... ☐

Q8 In our department, intelligence on our competitors is generated independently by several departments.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE..... ☐  
2..... ☐  
3..... ☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE..... ☐  
5..... ☐  
6..... ☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE..... ☐  
8 DON'T KNOW..... ☐

Q9 We are slow to detect fundamental shifts in our industry (e.g., competition, technology, regulation).

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE..... ☐  
2..... ☐  
3..... ☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE..... ☐  
5..... ☐  
6..... ☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE..... ☐  
8 DON'T KNOW..... ☐

periodically review the likely effect of changes in our business environment (e.g., inflation) on customers.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

ot of informal "hall talk" in this office concerns our competitors' tactics or strategies.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

have interdepartmental meetings at least once a quarter to discuss market trends and developments.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Marketing personnel in our business unit spend time discussing customers' future needs with other functional departments.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q14 Our department periodically circulates documents (e.g., reports, news-letters) that provide information on our customers.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q15 When something important happens to a major customer of the market, the whole department knows about it within a short period.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q16 Data on customer satisfaction are disseminated at all levels in this business unit on a regular basis.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q17 There is minimal communication between marketing and manufacturing departments concerning market developments.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q18 When one department finds out something important about competitors, it is slow to alert other departments.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q19 It takes us forever to decide how to respond to our competitor's price changes.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q20 Principles of market segmentation drive new product development efforts in this business unit.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q21 For one reason or another we tend to ignore changes in our customer's product or service needs.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

periodically review our product development efforts to ensure that they are in line with what customers want.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

business plans are driven by technological advances and by market research.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Several departments get together periodically to plan a response to changes taking place in our business environment.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

product lines we sell depends more on internal politics than real market needs.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q26 If a major competitor were to launch an intensive campaign targeted at our customers, we would implement a response immediately

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q27 The activities of the different departments in this business unit are well co-ordinated.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q28 Customer complaints fall on deaf ears in this department.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q29 Even if we came up with a great marketing plan, we probably would not be able to implement it in a timely fashion.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q30 We are quick to respond to significant changes in our competitor's pricing structures.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q31 When we find out that customers are unhappy with the quality of our service, we take corrective action immediately.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q32 When we find that customers would like us to modify a product or service, the departments involved make concerted efforts to do so.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q33 This centre generally has up to date equipment.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐
- 2.....☐
- 3.....☐
- 4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐
- 5.....☐
- 6.....☐
- 7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐
- 8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

is centre's physical facilities  
visually appealing.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

is centre's staff are well  
dressed and appear neat.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

appearance of the physical  
ilities of this centre is in  
keeping with the type of service  
provided.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

When this centre promises to do  
something by a certain time, it  
does so.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q38 When there are problems for  
the customer, this centre is  
sympathetic and reassuring.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q39 This centre is dependable.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q40 This centre provides the  
services at the time it promises  
to do so.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q41 This centre keeps its records  
accurately..

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q42 This centre does not tell its  
customers exactly when  
services will be performed.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q43 The employees of the centre do  
not provide a prompt service.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q44 Employees of this centre are not  
always willing to help  
customers.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q45 Employees of this centre are too  
busy to respond to customer  
requests promptly.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR  
DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q50 I can trust employees of this centre.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q51 Customers can feel safe in their transactions with this centre's employees.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q52 Employees of this centre are always polite.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q53 Employees get adequate support from this centre to do their jobs well.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q50 This centre does not give individual attention to customers.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q51 Employees of this centre do not give personal attention.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q52 Employees of this centre do not know what customers needs are.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q53 This centre does not have the customer's best interests at heart.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q54 This centre does not have operating hours convenient to their customers.

- 1 STRONGLY AGREE.....☐  
2.....☐  
3.....☐  
4 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE.....☐  
5.....☐  
6.....☐  
7 STRONGLY DISAGREE.....☐  
8 DON'T KNOW.....☐

Q55 Centre

- Kingsmead.....☐  
Whitstable SP.....☐  
Herons Leisure Pool.....☐  
Pier Sports Centre.....☐  
Highgrove SP.....☐  
Hayes SP.....☐  
The Venue.....☐  
Furzfield.....☐  
Hertspring.....☐  
10.....☐  
11.....☐  
12.....☐  
13.....☐  
14.....☐  
15.....☐  
16.....☐  
17.....☐  
18.....☐  
19 Riverside Ice and Leisure.....☐  
20.....☐

Q56 Staff Work Role

- Directorate.....☐  
Area management.....☐  
Centre management.....☐  
Operational staff.....☐  
other.....☐

Q57 Gender

- female.....☐  
male.....☐

Q58 Which Local Authority is this?

- Canterbury.....☐  
Hillingdon.....☐  
Chelmsford.....☐  
Hertsmere.....☐

# Themed Interview Responses



med Responses	First Order	Construct	LA
have regular informal meetings to discuss different approaches	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
mean a lot of it is anecdotal and that's how it gets passed around	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
I'd that, a lot of those things also get passed around to senior managers meetings and most of them are very interesting and I suppose that's one of the, I mean I a bit long in the tooth in this job, but it is one of the interesting things about the job that there are always these things that crop up almost daily which we haven't come across before the nature of a complaint or no two, or are rarely the same, exactly the same, so	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
I'm one of the mechanisms, I am the sort of designated marketing manager and we have regular staff meetings with the centre managers once a month, I in theory have regular marketing meetings with the managers	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
they don't always happen, but we do have a marketing plan, we had to produce that for the tender submission but obviously we would be producing one anyway, which we try and work to and I'm the actual bod that physically looks out the hard, the end material really, the advertising the leaflets the posters but it is sort of a team effort, obviously people, information is cascaded down from the top and via centre managers as well for their needs, but I've been with the department for, must be approaching 10 years so I have a certain understanding of what the facilities require anyway	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
most of it is by word of mouth with the managers, How has this promotion worked, how has this of advertising worked, we do try as best we can to get receptionists to ask how they've heard about us	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
at the moment it's all a bit loose, to a degree has been, with our new management system we are hoping to improve on that But a lot of it is done by word of mouth	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
most of it is anecdotal, a lot of it, is we have our regular monthly meetings, I will be asking managers how did that go, if it didn't work then we won't do it again next year, or we will query why didn't it work, did we get the offer wrong, was the timing in the advert wrong, and we do try and sort of take into account in terms of the marketing /marketing process	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
discussed this a couple of weeks ago and we think if we sent out a sort of staff attitude survey at the moment probably one of the largest complaints would be communication, and I don't know whether sometimes that's a knee reaction that staff don't believe that things are communicated to them having said that in our discussions we do agree that we do need to involve staff more	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
we also appreciate that some staff it really doesn't matter if you communicate to them or not, they are probably not interested, it's a job	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
we didn't know the centre managers at Kingsmead, at Whitstable Sports Centre as they were then, we didn't have the two pools but there was no, we now have, most of the staff know each other now	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
certainly at a senior management level, and we do place in a great emphasis on communicating at that level, but then getting it cascaded down really to the ground floor staff as well But it is important	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
mean all centres are supposed to have staff meetings, most centres have duty managers meetings so they are the sort of senior management meetings within each centre and issues get passed down really as and when it is pertinent to	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
mean I'm supposed to have marketing meetings with each centre manager as well, although it doesn't necessarily have to be the centre manager, I mean previously I was having meetings with a particular duty manager at a couple of centres who were picking up the marketing role on behalf of the centre and that does work very well	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
think that is something that has lapsed, it's something that we want to return to as soon as possible because it is quite lucrative, and again it hasn't happened really because of, again I will probably return to this time and time again in terms of the survival and the fire fighting and perhaps and looking at it personally my own sort of time management planning	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
think its getting it then cascaded down to the other staff, and sometimes I will see individual staff anyway and when I'm over there I make a point of dragging them in and praising or chastising as the case might be or teaching	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
bring it to that extreme we are, again getting back to the survival bit of it we are stretched on that I believe, our options are stretched, but at the moment it's difficult to assess how much of that being stressed is down to the new management information system and therefore people learning that system, getting to grips with it and therefore it would be very easy to throw resources at that all of a sudden and think that would be sort of answer to that when it will disappear itself in time so we have got to monitor that anyway	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
at each centre, each centre manager is responsible for producing their own plans and our marketing manager has a duty meeting with each centre manager to keep those plans on track, modify them	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
or else might we involve marketing within the centres? There is communication throughout each centre and again slipped off late because we have been chasing our tails but we have monthly staff meetings and weekly duty managers meetings, as standard but obviously it is very important for us to report performance to them and marketing is a large chunk of that discussion, the development of the facilities, customer care, tends to form part of the marketing element of the agenda	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
have monthly senior managers meetings where I have all the centre managers and various specialist managers at 13 of us in total put together and again a lot of the agenda tends to revolve around marketing	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
it is partly my role, the role of the marketing manager, and his meetings with the various centre managers	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
extremely important in my eyes and we don't do it enough	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
had a day away, all the managers last week, partly to try and get us back on track with our planning processes and give another look at the strategic direction of the contract over the next 5 years, and what we need to do with regard to its value	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
50% of that day was spent on looking at how we could look at improving on staff involvement, participation, communication, the major problem that we do have with predominantly low pay rates whether we ought to look at a performance related pay scheme, high staff turnover, communicating with staff was a topic of the day and have got to move on that, but we do have schedule of meetings, but those meetings tend to be a little bit too I suppose operational which is necessary, but we do try and drop in training elements within those meetings but there is a distinct of involving staff in decision making processes, and we certainly want to look at how we can develop that, we do have an annual system of appraisals, it is a fairly simple system, but we keep it simple but then it is done	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
we made it too onerous it would fall by the wayside, given the pressures that we all have with time	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
at the moment it is really via their training, it is via staff meetings, we don't have a heading called marketing but probably as marketing is really a part of all our operations it is therefore within the agenda anything we talk about probably involves marketing somewhere	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A

try and ensure that our overall aim is communicated to all staff, and it is a marketing aim I believe	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
are now looking at giving better performance information back to staff, going back to an earlier question, whether current system help or hinders our marketing we don't tend to reveal much about our performance because well we very worried about competitors getting hold of information, because they will do because we try and get hold of	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
we have tended to keep a lot of information close to our chest and a lot of very important information we have kept either just myself or my immediate deputy, and the third most senior manager but with the onset of best value we looking to relax that and we can persuade the council that tendering is not the best value option and we can be a lot re open, and I think that staff involvement should increase if we can start letting them know what is going on by	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
these are the objectives, and this is how we are doing against those objectives	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
blems are always reported back through staff meetings, they are reported back there and then if they are serious	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
es	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
also report compliments, things that have gone particularly well, we don't have quite so many of those as is usual in terms of for instance, here at Kingsmead, we have a particular problem with the design of pool changing rooms,	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
we do get a number of customer comments forms completed on that and other letters, and we discuss it at staff	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
elings and our weekly duty manager meetings We discuss means by which that service quality can be improved At	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
moment it is pretty awful, it is better than it was but something more drastic has to be done	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
gular meetings with, central meetings so that all centre management, senior management are present helps to	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
ure that the right policies are adopted and promoted	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
ommunication importance) Very, Staff need to know what is going on and why it's going on	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
ey need to know, if staff have the wrong information going through or information going through too late if can	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
et the way that they deal and treat with customers by giving possibly wrong information and slower service	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
can also lead to low morale and poor motivation amongst staff	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
ir, we have monthly meetings with staff, weekly meetings with duty manager staff	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
a fairly small centre we only have 25 employees, most staff are seen on a daily basis so any new information needs	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
communicated can actually be told more often than not on a one to one basis	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
if appraisals help sort of help to assess that situation anything coming through of significance in marketing will be	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
communicated by internal memos depending upon the importance of, it's attached to anything	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
might be to each individual or just to the centre to be then communicated verbally to the staff	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
y, again because it is a small centre they can be spoken to and then seen on a daily basis so that any issues or	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
blems or any matters arising from any instance, are dealt with quite promptly if not by myself then by the duty	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
managers and then passed on through, we have got the daily diary so that's just going to be left there for me	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
ident records for other matters more serious matters that are then passed on to senior management, so most matters	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
be dealt with immediately as they happen	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
ink possibly that over the years that the main difference is more formal meetings than we used to have which does	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
the opportunity to get the important information	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
ere is always the risk that when you are just doing on an informal basis that might get out to 90% of the staff but	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
or two miss out	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
t that is probably the main ways, but it slightly more, it's more structured	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
picking up your point which is the one with staff is, the staff are the most vital, the cascading of information and	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
ally communicating with them, whether is through letter form or whether its verbal, weekly meetings, monthly	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
tings, team briefings etc, are second to none	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
body within local authorities have as yet go it right, a lot are working towards it, some of the London Boroughs in	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
icular are way ahead of the rural areas, but again you've got to look at it yourself and for it to work, it's the old	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
g the latest buzz word is best value and everything that is associated with it, but if you don't mean it, if you don't	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
in that the staff are you're most valuable resource then don't say it	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
ht, how they are communicated with in general, obviously that is done by the general manager DSO and that	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
ades down with weekly, monthly meetings etc whatever he sets in	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
use with the general manager personally on issues	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
ing marketing specifically, that is only, it only becomes a part of the either weekly meeting with managers or the	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
thly with relevant staff, say for example receptionists, cleaners, sports attendants etc	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
it's only, it isn't done as a specific function, they maybe within the manager's meeting a section on environment, on	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
ncial issues, marketing but there aren't as such set marketing meetings weekly or monthly	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
y do have special meetings where if they are discussing the marketing plan for the year that they will call ad hoc	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
that will be done, it's not done enough but basically that is what should happen, is that they are more regular they'll	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
pen to be, oh well it's vital to the organisation now we are moving forward let's have a session on it	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
in, service quality if you look at the marketing I've said that it's only at weekly or monthly meetings as an issue,	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
n service quality issues are the same, so you can more or less say the same about the service quality as about	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
eting except for what you tend to find is there if an issues goes wrong in a centre it's usually a service quality	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
e	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
at comes down from that is that there is five or six main areas that we have discussed in best value working	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	A
ps, and one of those is communication	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
ctly how we would do it, we would plan and look at, as a group	Intelligence dissemination	MO	A
something that's an area I think that the centre to be honest is looking to improve upon with, to use computerisation,	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
re looking to bring in things like leisure cards and membership systems which will hopefully give us the tools we	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
t to measure our marketing success.	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
Obviously it is crucial in any organisation, but any service led organisation of this sort it is paramount because	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
ously the people furthest from the management are often the most in contact with the customer particularly in this	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
nisation here which is a larger than average leisure centre, working long shifts, people don't see each other very	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
and it's obviously crucial that communication is as good as it can be Obviously has a benefit for the customer	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
the quality of service.	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
fficient communication lines, internally and externally, within the centre and outside of the centre to get your	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
age across, and also the actual time to effectively market research your products	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B

olutely the most essential thing going in a centre of this size because if somebody doesn't know that something is going on then they are not going to be able to get the message across to the public	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
sically it is imperative that communication is taken all the way through from the cleaner of the centre who is here at thing in the morning to basically the person who locks up the building last thing at night which is generally the stewards and duty managers	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
he reception don't know from me what's actually going on before I advertise it then they are not aware that may be ing extra enquiries about a certain product	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
I don't get clear communication from the managers as to what they actually want me to sort of advertise then that isn't actually doesn't get advertised correctly so the information doesn't get out to the public correctly and, once you start to break down the information and trust between the public and what you are providing it's, you know it's piling up that up hill struggle again	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
mean obviously at the same time communication between ourselves and the basically local, well put local amenities, all services so that they can actually help to provide information about our services while, I sort of mentioned about ties with the town centre management, we've got involved in a lot of projects due to the fact that I keep her updated things that we've started on something new	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
we've recently had some swimming ratios from ISRM regulations, and it's been a case of just everyone possibly not exactly what's going on rather than having a breakdown and one person missing out	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
we've got, we have individual meetings for services which generally, it depends upon the department but generally at least once every six weeks and basically quality / service management is one of the issues that is coming up regularly cause of best value coming in	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
only problem might be that, from my point of view, that I have got such a large team, we have representatives and may be the information feeding down from the representatives that may not be as strong as it could be, but the thousands of minutes go out to those people as well	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
we also have a newsletter that goes out roughly once every other month, and that will have information about best practice and quality initiatives, and that also passes the information across	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
from my point of view, things are improving very slowly, but I think because it needs to be improved slowly, but to be perfectly honest at the end of the day a lot of the services we are providing where quality is concerned were actually very good, something that we are actually doing next week is bringing the whole new phone system because that's been our biggest problem and communication links from that point of view have been appalling, but everyone's been told why we are doing it, and everyone is jumping around for joy that we are actually going to have that improved	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
in really, that is another internal question and I think there are internal systems in place for staff briefings but it's probably better if you ask the centre manager.	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
mean communication is so important, communication, the right communication, team spirit is all good all important factors	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
think if I could solve the communication problem in here I'd be a millionaire because I'd sell it everywhere else	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
mean we have, we obviously internal memos, we have a staff newsletter, we have meetings we have all the normal means of communication that we have	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
we have a computer screen so we've got the opportunity to leave messages and that sort of thing	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
we've said that we've got all of those mediums, telephone, voice mail you know communication is always seems to be a problem in this	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
is exacerbated by the fact that we are open extensive hours and I think it needs to be said that some individuals are motivated to let staff know and others aren't and that's quite a difficult situation to get over	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
mean we are working on it and we've introduced more meetings and more focus groups than we've ever had before, if I could solve the communication problem it would be very nice thank you very much	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
they are not really, before April we had a part time marketing person who used to circulate all the details but it's something now that we are looking now to develop with the management team and once we've developed it with the management team we will then cascade it down the tree as it were	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
you know, as with everything else, health and safety, finance, aims and objectives, management plan, all of those things need to go down, it's something we haven't done, it's something we are going to do	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
well again, when we look at service quality we do notify the staff of our market research	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
they are aware of the ILAM reports that we have, that's the independent reports and we try and be positive	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
mean it's something that because we are now changing the structure we are looking at the customer services and he or she will look at that element, that service element, how we treat our customers how can we improve, customer care other things that we can introduce to improve and that will then cascade, once we have looked at it management level, we will then cascade that down for comments for staff, because at the end of the day we've got 150 staff and they all have got some good ideas and we've got to use those in the process of improving the centre really	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
nowhere like Riverside it's very important, it's also very difficult, I mean there are hoards of staff in terms of permanent and casual staff, I mean it operates up to 16 hours a day 7 days a week, closes one day a year	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
there are times when there are people in the building 24 hours a day continuously, and so there are substantial and complicated shift patterns, and communications is extremely difficult under those circumstances	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
over the past year or so, we have made substantial to try to improve that through giving staff the opportunity to communicate face to face upwards as well as down and it's important but difficult in a big operation like that	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
will not separately from everything else, Service Quality, we don't sort of say right today we are going to talk about service quality, because effectively the nature of the service is what most of the staff there are 100% responsible for, they know the lifeguard staff, your catering, the people at the sharp end really and it just forms an ongoing part of you know the regular assessment and feedback from the individual bits of the place	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
because we've got two reception areas because the ice rink is completely separate, it's important that at the moment to be sure that the cross overs people up stairs knows what's going on down stairs, other wise you don't see, people don't seem to know what the other half is doing	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
we have manager's meetings where we will also have updates on the internal meetings so you, anything that anybody reception from my point of view is brought up then I will bring to the meeting, so that everybody else is aware of, we are not only aware of just what our customer within our own area wants and is provided for, but basically what anybody in the centre wants as a whole	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B
I think now we are coming up to best value, and I know that there is a competition element in that, but I think we are quite confident in our abilities and what we are now seeking to do is to get the staff on board with you know our aims and objectives and our business plan and as part of that we will involve health and safety, marketing, staff relations and all those issues are important right the way down the organisation	Intelligence dissemination	MO	B

communication is vital, but nobody does it well	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
these are the sort of mechanisms we employ to improve the quality of service or service or service delivery, and ways I think as I say are trying to get feedback from staff, but how effective that is remains to be seen	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
think, well I don't think I know that they get feedback from customer complaints and customer praises, I think it is important that we have the pats on the back which are not as often as the kicks up the backside in terms of people writing to us, and saying that they are not satisfied	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
and so they have regular team meetings where information like that is fed back, but indeed, and probably Chris will tell you this himself part of Chris's staff development at interview was a requirement to begin to develop that process a little bit more, I am still not convinced as the director of the organisation that we actually encouraging greater feedback and greater involvement of the staff at the sharp end in the sort of issues that you are talking about and I think that I have a feeling and it may be commented differently that the approach is still too much bottom, I'm sorry, bottom approach as opposed to a sort of more equitable bottom up and top down sort of approach, so and as I say not being patronising to the staff at the sharp end but they are incredibly valuable sources of information to get in marketing process, and I don't think we are exploiting that opportunity as much as maybe we could do	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
it is having the ability to get the message across and that's not always easy and as I say a centre that opens for 100 odd hours per week so it is not an easy one there	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
Do you have a staff suggestion scheme? No, we don't	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
very important, we've highlighted it as an area that in our marketing strategy, and we have got 10 areas and communication is one of them, both internally and externally	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
think on a customer service training communication is part of it, because it is all customer care, and what I have mentioned in my marketing strategy is that obviously the internal customers, if they are not looked after and if they don't know what is going on they are not going to then pass on a good service to the external customer because if there's any sort of resentment bitterness or feeling of not knowing that will reflect in the overall service	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
number of ways, we have regular marketing meetings, I'm not at every one, but I am at most of them	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
I tend to get involved with the head person of that particular area, and we will then sort of go through the minutes to see how we are progressing	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
we have like a health and fitness group where all the centres get together and we discuss either short term and long term and long term fitness issues, what's happening with competition, we have got an action plan that we look at to ensure that we are sort of keeping on track of things	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
what was the question again? (Q rpt) Yes and obviously with the marketing strategy again I have told you we have group meetings on that and then obviously we will have minutes that will get circulated to even those people who aren't necessarily involved, so they're aware of what's going on	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
in with quality assurance, there is these audit meetings, with all the operational staff and various members, and we all get together and go through customer comments, cleanliness, health and safety all these issues	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
mean we have health and safety groups, we have training issues, there is so many working groups, working parties that get together on a whole host of issues, but some within a centre, some corporately bars and catering, again health and fitness that I have mentioned so these are when issues are raised I think	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
think it helps in that as I say we have just been through, and we review on an annual basis normally we would be looking to a business plan, and those business plans would be derived from each centre	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
the system assisted in that you know for the first time 'cos we are investing quite a lot of capital within Hertsmere, it's a lot is an understatement really, we've now, you know looked more strategically, not just at what we are doing in this financial year but what we are going to be doing over the next five years and we've pooled together all of the resources from all of the centres and a lot of people have had an opportunity to contribute to that plan, and I think that beneficial, so when the end document is produced, individuals from centres, not just centre managers or marketing people but other people can see where they fit within the development of that, I think then it's obviously owned, and becomes more of a working document as opposed to something that just is produced for the sake of producing it and then filed	Intelligence dissemination	MO	C
have just undertaken a comprehensive marketing review which has generated, and this is the first draft and I am going to tell Helen about it this very afternoon, that's the meeting I mentioned you, the three year marketing plan	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
what I think integral to that is the concept of communication, it underpins everything we do and we are talking both internal and external communication	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
again there are so many cliches in marketing and operations generally and that's because it's actually it's a very simple business that we are in, we really are, and communication in the first instance to our staff, the communication of my ideals, my aspirations which ultimately will translate into enhanced customer service, is crucial, but again it presents a single challenge to bring everybody on board, even if I communicate my ideals and Helen's ideals and I represent the ideals of elected members, there is an enormous chasm if you like between talking the talk and walking the walk at the sharp end	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
this is an example of a far reaching all encompassing review, it was chaired by myself and driven by myself in conjunction with one or two people at Head Office, Helen, marketing coordinator, and commercial manager	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
involved any number of sub working groups, but there again senior managers would chair if you like focus groups to get people different perspectives, different remits, different aspirations, and hopefully this is an amalgamation of all of which are embraced by the people in our organisation	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
within each of our centres there are management team meetings, there are sub meetings, whether it be receptionists, care assistants, we feed back into those meetings customer comments whether it be from our user groups, customer comment analysis, accidents, customer comments as I have said, all of those are fed into a database, regurgitated, they are cumulative and snapshots of the way our customers are perceiving any particular element of our service so for instance what we are looking for is not the odd comment here or the odd comment there, we are looking for themes, it's about representative samples and so on and meaningful information and the systems in place primarily database systems allow us to put together themes, in other words "your changing rooms are dirty, why"	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
could also cite again formal quality assurance systems like ISO 9000 which rely upon an auditing system which is carried out by all members of staff at different levels, highlights if you like areas of concern, operational concern	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
again, it comes back to this communication thing and how we are feeding back to people both at the sharp end and a little bit further back, problems and that the systems that we employ are many and varied	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
there are enough initiatives in place to ensure that we get feedback	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
have meetings on a regular basis so that gives staff an opportunity to feed back, because they are obviously at the sharp end with customers and what they hearing on the pool surround or in the pool surround or in reception or while they are teaching lessons is obviously is very valuable so that's more proactive in some sense than someone to write a comment which is invariably tends to be negative	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C

that might be positive comments about the service delivery or it might be "oh at the old pool you used to do X, y don't you replicate it here"	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
rt and parcel of that business plan would be a marketing plan, to the marketing to either centre context would be olved in developing a marketing plan and that would give us an opportunity, to look at, you know not just what we doing but what's happening outside, what are the social, political and technological changes that we need to bear in nd when producing a marketing plan what are our competitors doing and we go through the full SWOT analysis	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
ditions, a process as I say needs to be a communicated process, we need to have involvement from the people who ultimately going to be affected by the marketing, well marketing. So that's allowing people to contribute to the cess and thereafter making sure that what we have agreed in that process is communicated to individuals	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
rements, I think I have talked about communication I think throughout the previous questions and again it's, munication is a, I was going to say a two way process, but it's more than a two way process isn't it, it's more, staff aware of their role within the centre, if there are changes operationally or to the programme or marketing or their corporate initiatives that we have taken on board, obviously they need to be aware of it	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
ey are going to have interaction with customers on a regular basis that maybe I am not going to see or receptionist f isn't going to see, or a member of the teaching staff isn't going to be aware of, so it is important that they are municating back to me any ideas that they may have or any you know informal comments that people might be king, that they just think I don't really need to, or it's not my remit to deal with that	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
encouraging that ongoing dialogue	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
ny ways, as I say we have regular meetings, team meetings and then just general staff meetings, so that would be an ortunity for them to, and I proactively ask for their feedback on their programming ideas you know, I can see areas rticularly as it's a new building, parts of the programme that we need to work on	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
that's kind of an informal process but it is documented, so at least if there action points we will make sure that they reviewed at the next meeting	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
ey've all been, well they haven't all been but a lot of staff have been part and party of the marketing strategy that we putting together and the outcome of that will be communicated to all staff	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
s, appraisal meetings really form quite an important part of the communication process and regular meetings and raction on an ongoing basis between myself duty manager staff, reception staff, leisure assistants, so picking up as ch information as possible	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
say the same, all the processes would be the same	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
ey're changed when customer comment and customer feedback I think is a very tangible thing to use because it's just me as a centre manager saying I think we need to improve our standards of cleanliness or our standards of lth and safety or our, you know diversify the pool programme, it's coming from somebody else, and it's as I say it's gible, it needs to be, I need to give them some form of response. I'm not saying negative customer are useful, we'd e to eliminate all of them, but in terms in effecting personal change, then they are a useful tool	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
ernal customers may comment, we have contact from head office, from other centres, it is quite useful often ming best practice from another centre and you know saying to staff well, this is a template that is working where we can use this so other centres in effect will influence change maybe within this centre particularly as it's a / environment and Furzfield and Hawkmoore have gone through similar processes	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	C
staff aren't communicated with that they don't know where duty managers, centre managers, area managers are ing from, where the department is aiming to go in the long term, if that communication isn't taking place and they just left in limbo, and probably speak to the customers and make things up and as they see fit when asked questions	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
hin the centres there are weekly / fortnightly meetings that take place between staff, duty managers, senior agers where information is passed down through the line as it should work, in terms of marketing again at the next the only real sort of issues that are passed down the lines of communication are that if people want posters de up then they know where to go, if there are new classes taking place then they know who to go to and speak to ut getting the publicity that we do ourselves at the moment, but they know where to go and get that organised so / can actually publicise the new events that are taking place or the existing events that we are trying to target	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
ry, essentially important, very very important. We have staff meetings regularly, we discuss all the problems which you know the problems we have to live with but I think you need to let them know what is going on good or bad staff, what's going on otherwise they feel totally miffed	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
just discussed at staff meetings really and if there is anything they can do to help or assist you know for instance just recently wanted to market our creche and a couple of the mums here took posters down to the local clinics and lth centres	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
a way, even some months ago, that the not too distant past the thought of Alan and I talking together on one thing e probably would not have happened	Intelligence dissemination	MO	D
are working much closer together now and one of the benefits of that already has been, that some of the ideas on keting that have come from Alan's department haven't had the resources to carry it through and now through king together I am actually providing some of the human resource to do this in terms of basic marketing research, getting our receptionists to ask questions as people coming through	Intelligence dissemination	MO	D
Q) I think, communication, I think everyone has to understand why you are doing it, everything, you are not doing gs in isolation, going back to the expenditure thing before, I think everyone was working in little pockets of leisure we were never really linked together	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
hat has happened at our level, is that we are having more meetings, Eric is more aware of what information we t to get, we are more aware of the restraints in terms of staff availability and we will find a way around it, whereas re it was in the contract, out of the contract now we, the edges are more blurred	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
are going through the process at the moment of getting accreditation of investors in people and communication is rticably linked in investors in people What and if what marketing issues we cover in that would be communicated l, but I'd say it's not something given its significance it deserves	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
are staff have, obviously Eric has his regular meetings with the site managers, but I am not sure how often Eric see's is recys, but I have always felt that there might be a problem of communication	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
I have regular, and I know that is good, but sometimes we need to talk to recreation assistants but perhaps the sage hasn't got, but perhaps it's not the way in which I thought it was going to be given to them, not in all cases sometimes it's difficult because there is a chain of command, and perhaps the message does get mixed up with r things, there are a lot of other things to consider	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
can last time that she was around she was talking about, we are doing this thing over the summer up in the enture Holiday place in North Wales that the Borough owns I am not saying that the message would not have got ough the other way, but I think that it has reinforced it, that the staff say "oh you know, we are getting it through our line management and we are getting this as well" and I think it has probably improved it	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
I mean that has been our problem as well, not having enough access, or enough exposure to the staff because we : not had enough time	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D

ain through meetings with managers, site managers, area managers, certainly I know we have staff training every uesday afternoon for a couple of hours, where it would be one group of staff one week, one group the next week the y the rotas work	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
rious other issues crop up where things are chatted through it is explained to the staff and what they, what is ected of them in certain cases	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
ain, just at staff meetings we talk about all sorts of issues like that, what we can do about it, how we can cope with e best we can with the limited resources we have	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
ill, on these two sites service quality would be an issue in terms of inspections and monitoring which regardless of thing that Eric and his staff would pick up, if it is a formal thing and we do inspections it will be reported at our ular meetings and that would go down the line or we would deal directly with the site managers and advise Eric of at we have done So on the formal side of service quality that is covered within the contract	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
e also have induction packs where staff are given information on a whole range of issues, on how the centres ate from opening to closing sort of thing. So there is reading material as well as verbal comments	Intelligence Dissemination	MO	D
e will link that obviously to consultation packages and finding out what's happening	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
some of your aims and objectives potentially can go out of the window, I mean we have to keep focused on those iously but at the end of the day it's bottom line management and we have to survive	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
hat you can easily do is actually you throw out an offer and it's your existing customers who were going to use it way to take advantage of it and a classic one was last year we got lured into doing a Jordans bar promotion and it a lot of our regular swimmers who were taken advantage of the scheme and we didn't, couldn't get the feedback ther it was encouraging them any more times, i.e that the fact that they getting these vouchers well that they were ing twice a week instead of just once a week	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
: do find it quite difficult, a lot of it done when we do do some kind of promotion or advertising we often do do a cher, we are running one at the moment at the pier sports centre for the roller skating, and we know we are getting chers back so we will have look at that after the week's over and see how many we actually gleaned	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
w the advert to that centre cost £300, each of those 6 people joining would have been spending about £284 pounds, ne person has paid for the advert Now that's very simple Simon, but that's how it tends to happen	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
aring in mind we don't do a tremendous amount of newspaper advertising or high profile advertising for which we ly do want to know that we have spent £1500 pounds on that, have we got our money back on that	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
use my bosses words again, to have made £1500 and a penny is a success really, that's what we are really rested in	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
one respect they are the greatest marketing tool in many respects, they are also obviously at the end of the day they the people coming through the doors and paying the money which keeps me in a job, so they are incredibly ortant to us and as such we always take note of what the customers say	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
ean we have quite a, I mean our customer sort of comment procedure and the way that we glean information from ounters through anecdotal information which does get sort of passed around all the time I think is testimony to that	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
ean we need to get it right, and if the customers don't say what they either enjoy or what they don't enjoy that is re it can all fall down	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
in get 4, 5, 6 calls a day on a bad day asking me to advertise in, on this calendar, this surgery booklet, this disabled klet, and how to reach a quarter of million people in Kent	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
I then my argument would be that you could plan to death, but if you haven't got the resources to actually carry out planning then, but that what's we are sort of embroiled in at the moment is trying to improve that planning process actually come up with proper business plans for each centre as well which we have never really done before	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
I've had an overall plan and it's been very effective really because, I think because of the, really a lot of it's down to tr as I am concerned personally to the organisational skills and the oversight of Neil West He has been very much ontrol of that but I think we are aware not that we really need to get back to a probably to that tender submission we did about three years ago	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
ve make a loss in the first year, then everybody is breathing down our neck to have it turned around to prove that are turning it around during that year, if not it should really be put out to tender and the district auditor is looking, ching what is going on as well	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
are considering the use of customer focus groups, we have been talking to a number of individual groups again main customers which maybe the clubs, we have a membership scheme with about 1500 monthly subscribers, as as other categories of membership, so there are I think plenty of people we could probably draw from to perhaps y and do a little bit more than the usual questionnaires, and we can sit down periodically with customers and find what they want	Intelligence generation	MO	A
ng thought numm) I hope a lot of it is done naturally as a matter of course really, the type of people that we try and nit, the induction training their development once they are with us and the content of much of the communication ope that we focus on the customer, obviously all of the staff are aware of the phrase "the customer is always right" we tend to dispute that but we do try and ensure they are, every individual is focusing on a customers needs or as oming as we can be, the facility is as user friendly as possible	Intelligence generation	MO	A
oretically we should be doing it through our research, and that has slipped as well over the last two years, and s now I hope back on track this year, an annual user survey, we have customer comment boxes at any centre, we s a fairly regimented complaints procedure through our quality assurance, the quality assurance regime itself I hope ributes to providing facilities that exceed expectations, but we do need to do it in a lot more detail and we want to eyond an annual user survey to identify our main customer sub groups, and we are in the process of doing that at moment and each centre manager expanding their research schedule to perhaps one survey a month for each sub p or what ever is required and as we talking about earlier perhaps trying to purchase some computer software that help us in survey design and analysis and reporting so that we can have the where with all to conduct much more arch than we do at the moment	Intelligence generation	MO	A
don't really, we don't have any, or only few objective means of measuring the success of marketing effort	Intelligence generation	MO	A
h individual has an annual appraisal, and there are training plans drawn up as a result of that and that helps with ommunications it is time out again for each individual, if we could we would like to make that twice yearly but an't go that far	Intelligence generation	MO	A
mmunication is vital, and if we had a staff attitude survey, which is also something we are looking to do in the near e, another reason for looking at SNAP, is that we are pretty sure that communication would probably be the main lem area, it has been in the past and we try and address it but I am certain that staff at the front end would ably think that they really don't know enough about what is going on and they are not given enough opportunity to nore involved but linked to that a lot of managers think that low pay is demotivating, although it wouldn't ssarily be a motivating factor but it is currently a demotivating factor and unfortunately when we have spent a lot ne training staff and within a couple of years they are off to garage forecourts or restaurants where they can ably earn half as much if not twice as much as they are earning presently	Intelligence generation	MO	A

we wondered if we could look at performance related scheme where they could benefit from surpluses now we are in surplus and it might encourage them again with quality circles, or more product use of the staff meetings that have	Intelligence generation	MO	A
generally speaking, listening to people, not just customers but staff as well because they must a strong insight into what is required and also finding out information on competition and reviewing ways of trying to attract new people in	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
if something starts to drop in numbers and you haven't had any complaints it could well be there is something wrong	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
, its maybe that you need to talk the people that are still using it and find out what is going on	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
we have market research that is supposedly once a year, but it has been a bit lapse recently, market survey sorry, customer survey	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
we have customer comment forms available, we also have customer care forms for specific comments from customers	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
my view is that overall we tend to be quite positive quite good, overall tend to listen to customer needs and requirements	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
possibly it's budget restrictions and limitations have limited that to some degree over the past few years, but the principle is still there, but its a lot tighter and the sort of time element on human resources makes it impossible for people to carry out that as well as they possibly would intend to	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
the system helps by having a devoted person to give a unified approach for all of the centres to make sure that information is passed through	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
needs to be a fairly, needs to be good communication lines, needs to be very open communication lines so that people know that they can discuss, approach people or be approached and the general honesty of the set up so that people know that they actually will be listened to and what's promised will happen	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
directly by looking at the statistics of numbers through the doors, by listening again to comments, customer comments, staff comments, by looking at income figures, by looking at targets that are set, whether they have achieved last, and again looking at customer surveys, responses from advertisement, poster campaigns whatever	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
again I think we do achieve what we've said, we do lay down what we've set in our business plan, but again there is no direct mechanism, there is not actual mechanism monitoring of the how, or what effect the marketing has had	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
obviously the two ways that we do occasionally we do do market research analysis annually, or it should be annually sometimes that isn't the case we could do with more market research on what the findings are, it's as if we are trying ahead and doing the marketing as laid down, but how we are monitoring and evaluating what that's achieved	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
now obviously that is the role that the general manager has to achieve, myself being twin hatted being both client and tractor, I've got a role (a) to see that Neil is achieving what he says he's going to do, but (b) ensuring that the centre gets value for money as well	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
the second one is customer research, we are setting up in all leisure, not just leisure centres but other parts, beaches, caravan parks we are setting up customer focus groups so obviously best value and benchmarking etc will come on all of these issues, all come back to your marketing and how are actually achieving, or if you are achieving it you said you are going to do	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
again, harping back, two words that I will use more at the moment than anything else are best value and the performance indicators, local performance plan	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
Canterbury City Council has dedicated completely to following the regime of best value	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
we want those people coming through those doors, and you can't get all but you've got to get as bigger percentage as can	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
it to be effective we really need certainly within the sport and leisure angle we need that the people are (a) up to date with the latest information, the latest trends, how things are done within marketing	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
I've have like as I say one officer who is has a qualification in marketing, marketing based, but other people again just what they have picked up and what they have learnt and what they have experienced, I think that we actually do somewhat with keeping abreast of the latest trends as I say and just having the time to have the dedicate to marketing we do fall short on that as well	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
I've now just got a management information system in at the leisure centres along with the new financial management system that the client's got that will hopefully help us in doing that	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
the basic bottom line is when it comes down to it is that we're doing a marketing plan and we are following through the best of ability, but the monitoring and evaluation really is not there to back it up	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
even better, just coming up at the moment at the DSO, strategic planning meetings so actually the teams are getting together to discuss strategic ways forward and already coming out that is that there is a need for separate marketing meetings, not just marketing but the other areas that I have mentioned as well	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
when it comes down to it my own thoughts would be, I'd do more background information if I was looking at it annually, but I would use the experience of the people that I have got who work for me and take their information, that they think the way forward and I would actually take that experience, I would also, the networking that we do in Kent, throughout all of the leisure services, all of the different districts, picking up ideas of the way forward, that they are trying, what they are doing	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
currently at the council in investors in people, we are looking at issues of business excellence model	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
we would I, we have quality assurance system, we have a quality inspector, we have managed to persuade our client, my boss really who looks after the client side and oversees my side, we had a contract monitoring officer, and in the last 18 months we have managed to have him re-designated a quality inspector, the two roles are very similar	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
we has a schedule of audits, that I put together with him, quality audits every fortnight, and he has been attending our monthly managers meeting to give a report of those audits	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
we do have an external consultant that comes in once a year that we have continued with and he provides an audit of the full system, and we have the external assessors of course for our accreditation and so that is one aspect, that's not marketing but does cover a number of those areas, number of complaints is reported upon annually, whether or not we achieve our objectives and targets for a year is part of that evaluation, we have customer comments forms at every centre and they are monitored	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
in a wide range of things. By listening to customers comments, listening or taking note of customer actions, in our words attendances	Intelligence Generation	MO	A
in respect to marketing issues, it's, in the past cannot say, in the future its going to increase by the internal research	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we personally speak to staff within the centre about whether, especially because we've got Brentwood and arcas and Chelmsford, about whether they have noticed things in the paper, whether they, actually, what they think of	Intelligence generation	MO	B



me of the posters, what they think of the leaflets, whether they think because they are dealing with the public that they are actually being effective			
from the point of view of the product we are providing, the staff are quite forthcoming in their comments anyway, cause I think we are an accessible management team the staff find it quite easy to come and talk to us if they think something is not working	Intelligence generation	MO	B
there's a whole range of things really. On a day to day level or as far as the centre goes there is an element of market research, although I think that could be improved	Intelligence generation	MO	B
there's opportunities for customers to come forward via comment cards to offer their opinions	Intelligence generation	MO	B
there are user committees which are for the same opportunity and to a lesser extent, I mean in a big centre like this there is the opportunity to deal with staff directly to find out their customer wants and needs	Intelligence generation	MO	B
that's purely at a centre level, I mean you are looking to explore the bigger picture in terms of marketing in the sort of context of the centre of the council as the bigger picture or not, or purely at the centre? (Q at the centre).	Intelligence generation	MO	B
obviously there's questionnaire's that are filled in, comment cards, users committees all the usual things but I am not sure that they give us the information we that we need to be able to fully judge whether our actions are successful or not	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we have a number of ways that we listen to our customers. We have a users forum which is held every three months, it is chaired by an independent person	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we have a customer comments system which has about half a dozen points around the building which is emptied weekly and those are monitored on a regular basis	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we obviously monitor any written complaints that we have and obviously those replies are sent out, or the complaint investigated and then we sent out and that actually comes down from all of the staff and all of the replies then come back to me so I see all of what goes on	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we also have the borough council official complaints procedure	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we talk to all of our clubs within the centre on a regular basis and we talk to our customers as much as we can	Intelligence generation	MO	B
a lot of it is done informally, but we do have a formal system of complaints and you know proper sort of procedures relating to clubs and that	Intelligence generation	MO	B
our view is that we don't do it enough, and there is a number of reasons for that, time is probably the one big constraint on us	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we do do it informally, it's not formally done and it's difficult to assess that when you are doing it informally rather than the formal system	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we do have an annual marketing survey, we do have external verification of our facilities and our operation from a customer perspective	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we try and have a good public relations exercise on a regular basis	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we do get involved with outside organisations and help them as much as possible, but at the end of the day is the time coming in and time to be able to sit down and talk to our customers and listen to what they wanted to say. We do it but obviously it is time constrained situation	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we do know from our market research and our external assessment that we are doing a reasonably good job	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we do know from our market research where our customers find out about us and where they listen, they basically listen to us on local radio and see us in the local paper	Intelligence generation	MO	B
I have time to devote to a whole range of research, and customer surveys and needs analysis and so on and so on and so on	Intelligence generation	MO	B
mean the other thing that we do rely on are the sort of customer surveys we do because I mean they, periodically, in this case annually, they cover the same areas in so far as we are able to tell they are consistently applied	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we go through from the actual market research point of view first, so we know what the customer wants, we have customer comment cards which are in boxes which are emptied every week, and the departmental manager will usually deal those, they are obviously the right person to deal with the information going out	Intelligence generation	MO	B
we've got market research which up until now has been up until now has once possibly twice a year, minimum of a sample which actually indicate where % of our customers are coming whether it's the pools or the ice rink, and we make sure that corresponds with the people we actually asking questions to	Intelligence generation	MO	B
that I'm actually doing this year, but we've only done the internal ones so far, what we are actually going to do is go into the town centre as well and find out why people are coming in and why they are not, and also increase the T, and hoping to at least two of the public ones a year. Obviously that hasn't happened yet	Intelligence generation	MO	B
line Customer orientation?, do I know, well customer orientation as in knowing what our customers, our actual customers who they are and what they want, I would say our approach is actually very good because we do, every manager has contact with public within their department so you are constantly kept up to date with what people want, we quite often do duty management shifts so obviously you are in the front line, so as soon as you know what the customer is looking for and what they are not happy about	Intelligence generation	MO	B
if you want my opinion as an outsider, if you like, I think the staff on the ground here probably are not well, not as well as they could be I would say, informed of the urgent marketing issues that affect the customer. Obviously there are some staff that will know what they need to know, and that's about it, but I don't think it goes much wider than that I think it could do.	Intelligence generation	MO	B
would be certainly feedback from customers, whether that's positive or negative, obviously the more positive comments we have would indicate that we are providing a good quality service, and the negative comments would suggest the converse	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
the lifeblood it is, I do occasional lectures on various issues in terms of sports management and I always say that about a communications strategy or a communications policy how can you add any other policy or strategy being effective because you can't get through to the staff of what that policy is all about	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
I think it is absolutely the life blood and not just from management to staff but very importantly from staff to management and I think the communication, the freedom to feed back information because of all the formal mechanisms that you have in terms of qualitative research or feedback from customer user surveys, customer complaints the most valuable thing I think is the "off the cuff remark" that is made to a member of staff, the receptionist, the pool attendant or whatever it may be and there must be a mechanism to feed that back in up to management and for management to take notice	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
it is somewhat subjective and in terms of interpretation you would have to do qualitative you would have to do qualitative research into your customers, with your customers should I say using various mechanisms and to determine "satisfied" but I wouldn't rest there because I get very annoyed when I read that 95% are satisfied with our services,	Intelligence Generation	MO	C



all they bloody would be wouldn't they otherwise they wouldn't be coming into your building Why aren't other customers coming into your building and there are a high percent who are not interested in sport or swimming or dainton and I would not ignore those people but I do not necessarily think that their views are valid			
/that I would like to get to is "why do you go to leisure centre Y down the road and not come to leisure centre X which is our leisure centre" in terms of what we are offering, so I think in measuring that you have got to determine whether you are matching your service to those non user people who are sports people or regular users of facilities, but I think it is about a fairly detailed sort of quantitative and qualitative sort of research approach to determine if you can that if you are achieving service quality	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
I think, I would like to think that they are effective in the first instance, although as we have already discussed earlier I think to a certain extent that we assume that they are effective but there is a paucity of research which can actually correlate what we invest in marketing to profitability, or indeed social gain, which is clearly a fundamental importance of a local authority context	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
our intention in the first instance is to ascertain what our customers require and thereafter it is to provide what they are looking for on a cost effective basis which equates to value for money and precipitates in due course continuous improvement	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
well I think it has got to be considered as a force for good that the more feedback we can get from our customers, good bad or indifferent the more likely we are to engender satisfaction on their part and indeed retention	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
but at the end of the day, we have to be looking at sustainability, the Furzfield centre we've had a honeymoon period between 6 months and a year I would suggest, if thereafter we're retaining the number of people at swimming lessons, the number of people coming to our parties, that's got to be an indication that there is customer satisfaction out there and again we would mesh that with all sorts of user surveys, we carry out surveys on a regular basis, again taking the Furzfield, we have undertaken a massive research project into perceptions about the quality of our swimming programme, cleanliness, balance of lanes versus free swim versus clubs and so on and so forth	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
we have user fora, we encourage customer feedback by comments card, we subscribe to a customer charter which is a local authority thing, but we aim to turn around all our correspondence in a very short space of time	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
we are also undertaking a mystery customer initiative in partnership with Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield and so on it is inviting other people in from different organisations to objectively and dispassionately test our progress	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
I think that one of the first issues is to determine the customer base and the potential customer base and deciding what the most effective forms of promotion and marketing to that customer base or anticipated customer base and perhaps it is importantly to make sure that there is, that everything fits into place that all that we do is not just about a veneer it we have a good glossy brochure or we promote on radio or anything like that	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
as we have got, Chris Rushton the head of our operations will probably tell you more detail, but we have got four or five groups and we do sort of questionnaires we have done some independent research, I suppose the usual things that we are and more facilities are undertaking now and we do occasional user surveys so that sort of information feeds back and we have a formal complaints and suggestion schemes and a couple of our centres are ISO 9000 registered and as a part of that process we are feeding into the customer side of things so we are yeah we are proactive in there in that area we do a fair amount of that	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
one of the things that we are already introduced is our mystery shopper programme, and we doing that another two local authorities and we will be going in sort of feedback on the good and the bad of each local authority	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
ownership as I have mentioned is one that people to have input, which is why before we were working on a marketing strategy we had sort of focus groups with all the key players from all the centres and we had brain storming sessions, and we did see was the purpose of why we were in business so we reviewed our mission statement and then we had a lot of sub groups meet to discuss the various areas that we wanted to concentrate on in the next two years	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
we will also do questionnaires after, you know, a new service has been launched, which we will get feedback as to what we know what did they think, how did they hear about it	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
where possible we will ask customers you know, how they've heard about anything new or which part of our marketing campaign, was it posters brochures, ads you know heard about us, and obviously customer comments we get, and what else, they are just some of the things	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
looking at the number of customer comments that we get, and complaints, we can measure how well we are doing	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
so some of the centres have quality assurance so an external auditor will come in and see, and do an audit on the services, so that's again another way we can monitor service provision	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
so we have focus groups which have various members of the community coming in and they will give us feedback on particular areas of concern or how well we are doing	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
market research, strategic marketing plan which we are currently working on which I am sure you are aware of having been taken to Helen	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
customer comments card system, so that is proactively asking customers to comment on the level of service that we are delivering, and then they will be analysed on a monthly basis and we will look at that analysis and obviously attempt to make some amendments thereafter	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
we will ask existing customers of the about activities they are not currently pursuing so that cross selling rather than attempting to get new customers in	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
it is really trying to get feedback from existing customers	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
looking at external competitors which I think we do on a fairly regular basis, corporately, not necessarily on a site by site basis, but seeing what the competition are doing, keeping abreast of industry trends so we can feed that into our marketing strategy	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
I say, in terms of a formal system the only formal system that we have at the moment is a comment card system which enables customers to feed through, we have customer user groups so we ask representatives from each sector of our user group at any given centre to contribute to a meeting and that follows a formal agenda so again, we are asking them to get involved	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
could see it again marketing as very research, based very strategic based and I would have a very clear distinction between marketing and the production of publicity material	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
the problem we have, but this is inherent of the leisure industry is you know might come up with a, you know we've set up this five year plan but there are external factors that you have not necessarily identified at the beginning of the process that then impinge upon how we do things and those external factors might be political change, they might be changes in the economic climate that we weren't proactive enough to you know identify in advance, there might be changes in local competition, there might be problems with the building that we hadn't accounted for, not saying that it didn't happen here but it certainly did at Hertsmere Centre Pool. You know we were, plant would go down, we had problems with the roof and the building was closed for a period of time so that will all impact upon marketing systems and processes	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
through user groups, through informal comments that staff are often exposed to when they are out in the confines of the centre, for example, we would compare the use of the centre, maybe with other pools and over in the fitness	Intelligence Generation	MO	C

le of things for example we are looking at to brand our facilities and I also coordinate the health and fitness side of ngs			
it's as a team how do we think we can increase our customer base at this particular activity, numbers are dropping y are they dropping? You are there, at the interface with customers is there something we that are not doing or ould be doing?	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
t the moment we have, the spotlight is on us because we are in the process of being built, this is a third of what will a huge centre, so we have behaviour is affected through comments from architects for example, and from builders d from sub contractors, and other contractors who are on site who have all got observations to make how we are nning things rightly or wrongly	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
e do quite a lot of useful research in terms of existing customers within our facilities but we don't have that much mation on certainly non users, and even some of our user groups, we don't have information on purely because y are casual users, so they are just coming in paying a fee as they come in and that is problematic	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
y yes it encompasses all of the things that I have already discussed about looking competitors, looking at industry nds, looking at you know how other centres influence their service delivery to customers, are they doing things ter than we are, it's about looking at best practice and replicating it here and that might be within Hertsmere or I ould say it would be beyond that, it's looking at other leisure providers, and I'd see the publicity part of it as porting that function. So that would really be the outcome of that process	Intelligence Generation	MO	C
here is the potential to do more, because of the leisure card scheme we have the information on our customers, but haven't, the same way as a loyalty card in a supermarket, we have a lot of information about our customers and the y that they use facilities, but we haven't had the resources up to now to analyse it correctly and apply it	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
that is what I see as being the next step to try and start using this information, and that is a form of market research	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
we are at a bit of a crossroads at the moment, I mean through best value, which we have been working together as a up together on, there is a whole range of things that come out of this and the public consultation side of this is a big plus of this	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
think that we can, obviously if we are running any courses, if we are running any courses and specific promotions in paper or through other means we try and assess the effectiveness of that, I would say that is our weakest point	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
r leisure card system runs on that. Now when it, when we ordered it, back end of '95 they hadn't converted it to ndows, we weren't aware that the windows was going to be as close as it was. Now, looking back, we were under ssure to get something in, we also knew that there was likely to be a budget saving exercise. So the new system, I give back up, and will give back office systems, so we can do this stuff at our leisure rather than flitting around It	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
a real problem at the moment But hopefully will be resolved soon			
who actually does the inspections) Well it was me, I haven't done them for some time, but I have a colleague in the ice who undertakes them (so these inspections are internal) yes	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
the whole I think that we do listen to what customers have to say and respond to what customers say, we've only started focus groups with, certainly at Highgrove we've had one already and Hayes are having a meeting in near future and that is very much the sort of first round of these meetings where best value type things are coming therefore we are sitting with the customers and listening what the customers saying and actually acting on what y are saying for a change rather than in the past it's been very much a client / contractor split and the customer nsideration has been purely through the contractor and very little to do with the client and now that we are all one artment again we are trying to sort of have a, or both departments are trying to have some sort of impact on omer orientation and see what more can go with the customer	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
you just take say market research it may be on a borough wide basis that we would organise here, it may be on a ited basis in the sense say when we changed the locker situation at one of the pools the customers were asked what y felt about that	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
he department's approach, very difficult because we have only just become a new department, come together in one artment through the best value process we are having to undertake increased consultation, there was a user form at : of our pools, Highgrove Pool, three weeks ago which was very well attended, others are planned, Hayes Pool will e one soon	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
hat's the first open invitation to people to come and talk to us at an open meeting for a long time	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
e are having to ask some very basic questions of whether we should be providing anything to our facilities in the t place	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
ea, we really have gone back to basics on the this, because we are not a statutory service, you know we need find	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
as now run its course, we are reviewing it again now, we are now in the process of discussing with the company an grade to windows, we are looking also to see if we are to change the configuration rather than have separate PC's at h site, we will have a central server here, there are extra costs involved, but there are other benefits	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
we are going through that process now and one of the problems going back to your original question about getting information out is that it is so difficult because we only provided the system large enough to run the ticketing tem, so if we need to go to say to Hayes Pool to get the information out, we need to interrupt the admissions to do it. ould only afford the barest minimum	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
at again, I'd say since we'd had, since we have been one, we have joined as one department we have had more use mation pulled out of that system, real useful since we have joined into one department than in the last two or e years	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
ne of the ways is that we have an annual survey, where council services are ranked in order and for the last few rs leisure has been, its service quality provision has been fairly low with residents We are always flagging up ause we have got old facilities and that sort of thing	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
mean as before one of the things I mentioned of one of the resources we have a fairly sophisticated till system, but er having the time or the people to sit there and analyse it we haven't had, I mean we good on operating on osterity sures, and the big financial squeeze, and having to cut staff back, and it is sort of a fire fighting job I have had er than planning ahead on anything	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
: have got a reasonable amount of information about our own client customers We don't know why other people are coming, that's what we need to know	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
ie technological issue about the system that we have got, and has been in three years now and it was quite a major rise getting it in, because the difference in the old system	Intelligence Generation	MO	D
ould say if I included the leisure card I would have something in the region of £25K (Q And how much would you , would you consider as a minimum to do the effective marketing that you wanted to do) Well in the first year it ould be at least double that because one of the things we need to do is the range of non user surveys. So I would say rder to organise some realistic, this would all be in house, I don't think we would be able to afford outside ultants on that but we would need about £50k in one year just to get that basic data going, and then somewhere in region of £30k to £40k a year after that But I am looking over a bigger range, this isn't just the two sites	Intelligence Generation	MO	D

it we have come to the conclusion, even that is 90% of the staff, it probably isn't, we should be doing it for the 10% anyway, and we should be trying to, when I started again, I mean going of at tangents here, but I mean when I started in the department, it was very different, I mean it's pre CCT and I didn't know the centre managers, I was the centre manager at the Pier Sports Centre	Responsiveness	MO	A
gain, in my position it probably wouldn't be me doing it, if we do develop in that sort of area, really again, because my background is basically managing the facilities, I have carved this sort of niche for myself in terms of actually knocking out the physical stuff and that is an area that I would like to develop So I could carve that for myself but it wouldn't necessarily be me doing it because it doesn't necessarily be me doing it because it doesn't necessarily make good sense for me to do that	Responsiveness	MO	A
has a lot of people coming through and it would take pressure of their reception counters if they had a customer services desk	Responsiveness	MO	A
ain I'm not sure I understand the question, I mean without gadding into them nuts and bolts perhaps of my own personal situation which is as "the marketing manager", I mean I have a part time marketing assistant which was sort nearer to full time at one stage but again resources and the nature of compulsory competitive tendering tends to state that I am deputy sport and leisure manager, I am marketing manager I am manager of Herons Swimming pool, in the chap who knocks out all the marketing information, I am the graphic design artist, I am the one with the Apple Mac, so my promotions assistant is sort of day and a half very occasionally	Responsiveness	MO	A
ne not seen her this week for instance and probably won't see her next week and so it's very, the actual sort of, it's not much the system I suppose as the actual organisation of the department but some of that is driven by the fact that one of our unstated aims is really is survival in a contract situation and being in the early part of a contract that is the name of the game really	Responsiveness	MO	A
mean we used to go out to an advertising agency and pay through the nose for the kind of stuff that I now knock out, ridiculously cheaply as far as I am concerned, it is a more cost effective way of doing it	Responsiveness	MO	A
actually I mean I think it's a better way of doing it, I have control, I mean I am knocking the programmes to the centres and I, the sort of the feed back I get from the centres if that if there is something wrong with the programme I can change it immediately	Responsiveness	MO	A
at 10,000 glossy programmes done from somebody and within a two week period you know at the start they are out of date already because something happens inevitably, the timetable has to be changed, but the constraints do tend to financial especially in the early stages of a tender submission, or tender success	Responsiveness	MO	A
it each individual centre has its own individual need	Responsiveness	MO	A
ere are more generalised things which do apply to all centres but obviously the nature of our facilities as well is usually if you compared them with perhaps other districts we have peculiarities, I mean something like the Pier sports centre which is literally out on an old pier and has quite a history as far as roller skating goes, and its the home of roller hockey, their needs are very specific and very different from Whitstable Sports Centre which is a dual use facility in evenings and weekends and is attached to the school and their activities are quite different in some respects but from the marketing point of view, we do place a fair amount of emphasis on the need to get people through the doors and to disseminate information as well which is all part of the marketing processes which is perhaps as I see it	Responsiveness	MO	A
rept) Right, what conditions, obviously really from my point of view you've got to hit your target audience, there's point in, I mean our philosophy and a lot of which has been passed down to me it's information from say Neil West, so is, has qualifications in marketing	Responsiveness	MO	A
my sort of philosophy on marketing is born out of, I've gleaned from him over the years, but our philosophy is really we want to target the audience as best we can and because of the constraints on finances as well we very have to hone in on who we actually trying to get at here	Responsiveness	MO	A
metimes we miss the point, I mean I'm aware of that, we knock out so much stuff, a lot of it is purely informational, people need that information but we do try and target the audience	Responsiveness	MO	A
ell my response is why do I want to reach quarter of a million people in Kent, our facilities don't travel on the motorway, our facilities are local community based facilities, we want to get to the people who actually live in the area, Herne Bay and Whitstable, included obviously, they're our target audience and even with Canterbury as being such a huge tourist trap, again our facilities on the whole don't attract tourists, certainly not day trippers for them although Canterbury is a big lure for the numbers of coaches that are in every day, they are coming to shop basically	Responsiveness	MO	A
use different means, we do use vouchers whenever possible if we are advertising	Responsiveness	MO	A
we don't do a tremendous amount of advertising having said that we are trying to contact the local population we do in so we use the local press reasonably frequently	Responsiveness	MO	A
hen we do we obviously like to, because it's getting the promotion like the actual, we see an awful lot of centres sort out I know doing two for ones and bring a friend and doing offers, and we often see it, and we've have shown this is true in the past where you try and encourage, what you are trying to do is encourage new customers	Responsiveness	MO	A
high value purchases like our five star scheme, my manager of Whitstable Swimming Pool when we did a piece of advertising in Whitstable knew of six people that had joined as a result of this advert	Responsiveness	MO	A
mean in terms of in terms of the marketing it is practically everything that you want to talk about really, you know building through to the staff, your programming etc	Responsiveness	MO	A
ere are other costs with me I suppose but I have always seen it as a very cost effective way, I understand the finances as well and from my previous, we've used one company in particular quite a lot and they don't understand at you are asking them enough and therefore often things are coming and going backwards and forwards all of the time and it's not being got right and that's costing you money all the time, it's frustrating, most of the centres know you can come to me and I can bash stuff out there and then for them I mean I can get stuff out the same day, and, but there isn't enough money at this moment in time to properly be doing the marketing	Responsiveness	MO	A
ney and the marketing and how from my own personal point of view how I would like to see it go is perhaps different from, and I tread that line as well because I am deputy sport and leisure manager and I am marketing, I am a manager of a centre and I constantly sort of put myself in Neil West shoes and if I probably wouldn't allow me to do these things, because certain things I would like to do because I am not sure that that would be the right way to go and I am aware of that constantly, it's all very well sort of carving out my own sort of niche, and doing the bits that I like to do as opposed to the bits that I know probably I should be doing be doing for the department But no, we haven't	Responsiveness	MO	A
hen you have got people perhaps such as myself having a swinge, doing 2 or 3 things at once, some of the other effects of the job like communicating to staff and having the time to sit down properly at staff meetings and duty managers meetings and get across all you want to get across it tends to be sort of firefighting all the time	Responsiveness	MO	A
not aware of too many other sort of sport and leisure departments throughout the country although it will probably happen in the big cities maybe they do try and we do try and take very much more of a private club approach to some of our activities and facilities than an awful lot of local authorities	Responsiveness	MO	A
in my own selfish point of view I would love to carve out, I like, say messing about, the graphic design stuff on the computer	Responsiveness	MO	A
t they are kind of areas that training I do believe, training is unfortunately again a little bit the same as marketing in itself is at least one of those things when you are saving money there the areas that often get short shift	Responsiveness	MO	A

have an officer whose responsibility marketing is and he has his own office, luxury, all his own equipment, he has promotions assistant working with him, now he collates the promotion plans, the marketing plans, and tries to provide a proactive role but, I must admit it has slipped over the last few years where it's tended to a bit more active but we are trying to get that back on track now, but he has a huge amount of work	Responsiveness	MO	A
that system? Right, I don't know if it really hinders it (*help or hinder?) yea that's right, we are working very much in it's not really a competitive environment, we are working in a contract environment which means following a tender, budgets are really tight for at least 2 years we have to instigate a number of growth items projects, very very quickly for winning tender, we have, really what I would say a limited number of management resource and so we tend to focus on key areas, key result areas, we have to get straight in and we have to get those off the ground, we have spent, we usually spend quite a lot of time preparing for that point so it not a question of just diving straight in and running around like headless chickens, but it is a very pressured period and the time goes very quickly and we need those projects to pay dividends quickly or else the contract doesn't survive, we have just completed the first 2 years of this 7 year contract and they, all the projects have paid dividends but it does result in a number of things going out of the window, the business planning process is, I suppose because we have planned for that 2 years, we know what we need to focus upon and our effort really is directed towards that, and I tend to orchestrate it with it all the managers, and therefore a lot of day to day business becomes, tends to react to situations rather than being fully prepared for them, so most of our marketing effort does go out of the window	Responsiveness	MO	A
tends to be that my deputy has a week where everybody is sending him material to have produced, new events that are cropping up, new elements of the programmes, even silly things like appropriate moments in the year when we could be should be reviewing our charges for the annual presentation to the council or the budgeting process, we find at we are missing those deadlines and the annual user survey hasn't happened for the last 2 years because the marketing effort really has to be projects because we need a result from those	Responsiveness	MO	A
that was both, we had a target of 1000 enrolment within the first year of that scheme operating and we actually achieved something like 1300 and we are now 1500 and we have decided to cut off at that level now because of the number of people trying to get into the gyms and dance studios and so on	Responsiveness	MO	A
the council sets the charges once a year on our recommendations so for the bulk of the charges we would present a report to the council and we generally do not have any problems with getting those through however there are quite a few activities that are introduced during the year, it might be for instance recently it's the spinning cycle Reebok actually that are, and we set our own charges for those during the year and bring the council up to speed later now it is very difficult, because they don't necessarily have the maturity or the work experience despite training to allow provide what I would term a professional service, their immaturity tends to come through	Responsiveness	MO	A
we don't tend to have promotional budgets as such, our ethos is that a centre can spend a million pound on promotion they want, provided they make a million and one pounds within that one contract year	Responsiveness	MO	A
we would like more flexibility on charging, we are quite lucky, we do have some flexibility but we still have to report various people each time and be a little bit wary of council reaction, members reaction or our client sections reaction, treasurer's department reaction as well	Responsiveness	MO	A
so it is quite a good performance, we are very pleased and the projects, we had a monthly subscription scheme that we introduced and we increased the marketing output and very little else, there were other smaller projects but it was really those two areas that we improved and we can look at what we call the five star membership scheme and say that generated an extra £136k, so £136k from £233 possibly derives from the marketing effort, there were other programme changes and smaller items that we introduced	Responsiveness	MO	A
we ever felt that is was putting customers off then we would put more resources into it	Responsiveness	MO	A
we do have a project (changing rooms) which has been costed we think would solve a lot of the problems	Responsiveness	MO	A
since when, just, as far as Canterbury is concerned I have been here must be in my ninth year now and I came in at a time when all the staff present were really providing a caretaking service, they were all very nice people, they were all liked by customers, but they were pretty much opening doors, setting equipment up, and doing the cleaning, and we introduced at an early stage, and that continues because of the staff turnover, an ethos where we are going to try to go beyond that, where we are trying to exceed a customer's expectations, I think wow factor is one of the latest buzz words, isn't it, where you are not just opening doors and locking up behind them	Responsiveness	MO	A
we would spend a lot more on quality, I would spend a lot more on issues, marketing issues, improving, a simple one the moment is a customer services desk at one of the two main centres	Responsiveness	MO	A
he is the equivalent status really to my deputy contract manager who looks after the marketing and the business development manager is very much a project manager, but seeks new development works with the managers, works with myself, helps with the planning process and oversees the major projects	Responsiveness	MO	A
Is it a design issue or is it a staff issue? It is primarily a design issue, and if we could chuck more resources at it wouldn't be a problem I don't think, it wouldn't be a problem I don't think but again it is that balance, that trade off of client quality versus adequate quality that keeps customers coming through the front door	Responsiveness	MO	A
he detail to achieve those objectives involves a lot of development and improvement	Responsiveness	MO	A
involves a number of processes for us strategic planning, business planning, we produce a marketing plan within the business plan	Responsiveness	MO	A
we have our planning process, we set our business objectives and targets which we obviously see as a development in the year of the contract	Responsiveness	MO	A
the marketing plan elements, the headings that we use, the product, the typical marketing mix, the product the service : facility developments, customer care, programmes of activities, we have pricing strategies, sounds a bit grand but it generally fairly simple, but we spend a fair bit of time on our charges, we have promotion plans which my deputy, a poor individual, has to try and oversee and make sure everything is carried through we have a schedule of research which is undertaken and we have performance monitoring review and reporting to ensure that we are staying on track with the plans and modifying the plans accordingly	Responsiveness	MO	A
we tend to do it, when we won the most recent contract I was under a bit of pressure from my new principal leisure officer to restructure, and we resisted doing that and this chap I have who currently spends most of his time on marketing he was spending more time at one of the centres managing that centre with marketing effort on top of that and no promotions assistant	Responsiveness	MO	A
now we did notice during the first year of the contract that our income took a dive, and our loss for that year was rather than projected in the 7 year plan. Now we had forewarned the council that that was likely to happen, but we didn't prove it then and after year 1 of the contract and got him away from that centre and gave him a promotions assistant and since then have turned it around, but that is in conjunction with other projects so again we can't say that marketing effort increased therefore it generated a £30k or £50k additional surplus but our marketing output went up, promotional output went up greatly and it has coincided with a much better performance (Q what was the level of the performance increase?) Well we made a loss in year 1 of £200k give or take a few pounds and we made a surplus in year 2, end of year 2 just recently finished made a surplus of £33k and that is on turnover of £1.8 million	Responsiveness	MO	A
we don't think that prevents any restriction, but staffing resources do and also with management we have taken the view that we needed a dedicated manager for marketing and he has a promotions assistant but he would like another	Responsiveness	MO	A

if time promotions assistant for all the work we would like to do So our promotional effort is truncated			
Do you have a sports development officer? We have a sports development officer but not within the contract, that is client function We do part fund that role, but we don't see very much from it, we see very little They have a development plan and they tend to work with schools, and they run courses at the local tennis courts and the diversity but very little with ourselves There is very little programme time available, again our work is very much plus orientated, therefore any work that sports development did would have to be part of our planning process	Responsiveness	MO	A
interpret by customers having minimal queuing time to get into use the facilities of their choice	Responsiveness	MO	A
the business plan again basically says what they will do and what they will achieve or try to achieve and they are usually kept to that value ?? So its for the DSO for the business plan to say what we are trying to achieve within a set time	Responsiveness	MO	A
this includes all of the publicity that is done for the leisure centres, but also the contract specification has certain requirements which, there is a copy here which I can go through here, which I can go through here, which is a seven year plan	Responsiveness	MO	A
What Neil Mason does who is the marketing officer, will actually co-ordinate the whole marketing function for the leisure section	Responsiveness	MO	A
basically people have learnt that the customers are the most important people, they are the people we serve	Responsiveness	MO	A
again no, not to the same extent they are picked up a fair bit within the training there because a lot of the elements of service quality are down to training the staff properly and actually giving the knowledge to do things so it would be thin there, but there is also the service element that yes, there would be, there's more budgets required to actually help that, but I'd pick that up in training basically	Responsiveness	MO	A
however what I will say, because of the individuals we do have, and the general manager has a marketing background, that also the deputy manager, Neil who you will see later has, has got a skill that's there, and he puts a lot of his own time in and a lot of his own efforts, and he has got a pride in what he achieves	Responsiveness	MO	A
end product? The vital part that marketing plays in that the marketing that we do should actually achieve what the end product that we require	Responsiveness	MO	A
isn't a thing of just throwing money at it but it's actually finding the way that's right, but is there a right way, is putting paper advertising at say for example a set column within a local paper every week of the year that's going to stand out against going into giving free sessions, etc	Responsiveness	MO	A
my interpretation of customer orientation is that the mix of customers, view is as the main facility in Chelmsford is what we are seeking to widen that as far as possible	Responsiveness	MO	B
most of them relate to, well I mean they all relate in one way or another to the nature of the offer and the public reception of that customer attitude	Responsiveness	MO	B
but, I mean I think basically as long as you deliver what you said you are going to do and you deliver that in the right kind of way then I think that is it	Responsiveness	MO	B
so, you know, we know what the likely lead in time is for they promotional campaign, so lets respond	Responsiveness	MO	B
we don't do anything on an international scale as such, even though the ice show does actually go wider afield and throughout the whole of East Anglia, and also promotions, and that's whether it's providing complimentary tickets and competitions or whether its actually going out and doing a stand sort of at a show	Responsiveness	MO	B
no, hinder possibly I would say, it's difficult because we are such a large building and a public service we are giving more and more private gyms opening up in the area and we can't always promote as more as attackingly as they do against us because it's not the way we actually deal with things, we can't provide memberships and things like that which obviously a great sort of function for those type of places, but on the other hand that actually helps us because it means our doors are open to anybody, and whether you want to come once or every week you know you can, you can sort of come along and use that system. But I'm afraid that's the main help or hinder of the system that we are working within	Responsiveness	MO	B
we do try and, as far as possible get to the widest possible community out there that our facilities allow us to but I would say that there is a danger with some of the facilities, because it is easier from a marketing point that we do get those that are easiest to be targeted and I think that is a bit of a weakness	Responsiveness	MO	B
so you have got to be capable of being flexible and responding to their needs fairly quickly to areas of the programme that are, need to be altered fairly quickly, particularly in response to obviously, competitors	Responsiveness	MO	B
again I don't have to report it to committee, but I've got the authority to increase prices annually up to 15% or two times the retail price index	Responsiveness	MO	B
the contract includes set opening hours which can be varied upon agreement and	Responsiveness	MO	B
I think that can mean all things to all people, I mean I would suspect that if you were to talking to a private sector creator effective promotion would be ensuring that your activities in a marketing or promotions sense yield a benefit, and in the private sector that is more about financial benefits, I think in the public sector we have to market to certain segments and there is a need to ensure viability within set budgets but also there is a need to be aware of the needs of local residents and that is where we get into the sort of social marketing of looking at people with greatest needs or target groups whether they be women or people with disabilities so in terms of effective promotion I would think it is about reaching your target audience and persuading them to take part. that is effective promotion in the public sector	Responsiveness	MO	C
suppose one element that I think we could maybe focus more on is maybe non users which is always a big issue and in terms of ploughing resources into that area, it is also a fairly big cost, the outcome of which you know you are going to be able to necessarily justify prior to embarking on the project	Responsiveness	MO	C
we have to react to the competition and spend more on marketing to do that but also try and pre-empt what they are doing and we you know have got a lot of new facilities now and so again the marketing budgets aren't always adequate but we do the best we can really	Responsiveness	MO	C
I think you also have to be open minded to new opportunities, the web site is probably a prime example of that, not dismissive of anything, to be prepared, that lots of people have good ideas	Responsiveness	MO	C
ways bearing in mind probity issues and decency issues and things like that but I think that the biggest condition let people who are at the sharp end determine the best way and it is not just about money its about other things as well that for the facilities so that the conditions that prevail is a very open mind and a trusting of the staff that are involved in the marketing process and allow them to get on with it	Responsiveness	MO	C
we may have to spend more money from Eric's budget because we have identified the need for something else which actually will create more income for this side	Responsiveness	MO	D
repeated usage or if we are marketing a particular course or whether the course gets filled or not, because we actually don't go externally, it's all internal stuff it's very hit and miss so the best we can do if we got a new course running we advertise in our centres and hopefully it will be filled but then again it's from current users and not particularly anybody new	Responsiveness	MO	D
repeated usage or if we are marketing a particular course or whether the course gets filled or not, because we actually don't go externally, it's all internal stuff it's very hit and miss so the best we can do if we got a new course running we	Responsiveness	MO	D

advertise in our centres and hopefully it will be filled but then again it's from current users and not particularly anybody new			
Basically, when you think, even the best of authorities a very small percentage of the local community actually use the facility, you appreciate where you fit in to the local facility	Responsiveness	MO	D
Fees and charges are set centrally, limited flexibility for on site staff to change those although we are trying to deal with that	Responsiveness	MO	D
We are limited purely to very small amounts of finances perhaps to put adverts in papers ourselves and we have a marketing manager, who is called a marketing manager but he is really producing localised publicity leaflets posters things like that to put up in all the sports centres and pools	Responsiveness	MO	D
The people who are in the front line who I think know where the marketing is needed and what sort of publicity is needed don't have the budget and the finances to actually to implement any of that marketing	Responsiveness	MO	D
I think that the major conditions that we need are that the people operating the centres have the budgets, it is my belief that we also have the knowledge to actually to carry out effective marketing, we perhaps need to sit down with the client officers and develop a marketing strategy for the whole of the leisure facilities within the borough, and then once that is developed, allowing the centre staff and area managers to start marketing efficiently and effectively their centres	Responsiveness	MO	D
would firstly give the two CCT sited at Hayes pool and Highgrove pool their own marketing budgets and then through development with the client and the contractor come up with some sort of marketing strategy that both parties would be happy with, and then implement those strategies from the centre, from where I believe we have the knowledge and expertise to know where marketing is needed and how it should be implemented	Responsiveness	MO	D
absolutely not, zilch, haven't got any marketing budgets, or we don't hold marketing budgets at any of our sites	Responsiveness	MO	D
so you and it's sort of, if these posters don't get out the creche isn't going to succeed you know it's our best effort at doing it do you mind taking it when you go down there and the staff understand that and they do everything to help	Responsiveness	MO	D
Promotions is dealt with predominantly here or borough wide advertising and site specific promotions are handled over on site by the site managers or by an officer within the contract side who has experience of desk top publishing	Responsiveness	MO	D
As far as individual sessions are concerned it's basically filling up a session, therefore there can't be too much wrong, or we have pitched the price too low	Responsiveness	MO	D
In the department, it's a big department if you talk about the recreation department I don't think they particularly give a damn, but if you come down to the leisure services actually on site then people are much more aware of what the customer wants, and what their needs are, but they can't do much about it to be quite honest	Responsiveness	MO	D
The system that's in place at the moment is very, a big hindrance because you've got a recreation department that hold the budget and aren't really aware of what is required out in the sites and therefore you've got a catch 22 situation here the leisure site managers are trying to get funds released for marketing and because there are so many cuts in the budget in leisure we can't get anything released to do anything	Responsiveness	MO	D
I've got one person who is named a duty manager / marketing person and essentially he is not the marketing person - is somebody who has got a bit of flair that we have got in our own midst and named him that because he was the best we could have, we couldn't recruit a marketing person, there are marketing people at the civic centre but they are over the whole of the borough and not specifically leisure and again we have to pay for that service so, I've forgotten what the main question was haven't I! (rpt Q) The role of marketing, is really to, like question 1, is really to let everybody know what we've got on offer	Responsiveness	MO	D
Well it's to ensure that the facilities that you are programming or providing meet the needs of your users, and non users as well of the community within existing budgets within simplistic terms, and that we are able to say that we are meeting a demand, and that we have got justification in order to change things around to meet that demand	Responsiveness	MO	D
Whereas expenditure was very very closely watched, very very scrutinised to the nth degree, income was more of a secondary issue, and we are just trying to redress that balance now	Responsiveness	MO	D
The thing we have done, in certain work areas tried as far as we are able to within budgets is to increase the numbers sort of permanent staff. So rather than have 3 people all part time who are continually changing, we now employ 10 person full time on a contracted basis	Structure	MO	B
The main thing if you had asked me a month ago would have been the phone system but that is coming in. I don't know really, I don't actually know because the phone system would have been on the top of my list, computer system's very effective	Tangibles	MO	B
What do you mean by "The system"? To be fair it's quite reasonable is that because the DSO as such do operate as an 18 month length contract, so they aren't stuck totally by the council's rules and regulations they are allowed to open up and usually do more and probably get things done more quickly Basically they have got a pretty open style and they are allowed to do as they see fit	Responsiveness	MO/SQ	A
We have queues which is nice, but we have telephones that ring, receptionists even with three behind the counter just can't pick up the phone, despite trying all sorts of techniques, we can only have, we just can't afford to employ too many people, we want to get the telephone away from reception with a computer now we can do that, we can take the bookings anywhere we like, out in the car park if we want Over the last two years, we just couldn't entertain that, I spent the money on a counter, a computer link and staffing	Responsiveness	MO/SQ	A
Expenditure in terms of finance, I am trying to think of some examples, perhaps we can go on to staffing perhaps a lot of the system that we operating within has driven down labour cost, now we, that has meant, we are tending to employ a disproportionately large number of young inexperienced staff at low pay rates	Responsiveness	MO/SQ	A
I don't really see that, I mean direct competitors in terms Sport and Leisure, we don't seem to have many, I mean I would name them, beyond that the wider sort of competition is computers computer games, other activities, I mean you could look at almost anything, pubs, clubs eating out, there's lots of competition out there and trying to get that money to spend out of people	Competition	MO-NS	A
It isn't, and in this area, it isn't so much that the private leisure clubs at present are the kind, not to be sort of too meaningful but are the Mickey Mouse sort of "oh I like pushing weights I'll open up a gym" type place which actually gives us a favour on the whole because they do tend to take away the type of clientele, which again without being too discriminating over this they do take perhaps the grunt and groan merchants and give them that sort of spit and polish effect	Competition	MO-NS	A
Having said that, I mean that's very much sort of old hat now, even the sort of private clubs tend to be a bit switched then that, but they do take a clientele which sometimes wouldn't necessarily fit with our general social economic groups perhaps, we will have in the not too distant future a David Lloyd centre build across the way at Kingsmead which will, that again that will be another kettle of fish, but again they may cream off a certain number of users, but there are all sorts of different issues and bridges to cross before we have to tackle that one as well, and from our own point of view we are not necessary too worried about the David Lloyd centre either because it, the King's School that was built down the road hasn't hit us very hard	Competition	MO-NS	A
As we are not too concerned about the local competition it is probably the wider issues of competition from elsewhere	Competition	MO-NS	A

nd perhaps all sorts of issues regarding sort of PE and the curriculum in schools and the kind of getting sort of enagers, especially perhaps girls into sport and the decline in swimming and etc We are aware of all those issues but s how we then react to them perhaps			
There is a wide range of leisure pursuits, but we do have some more direct competitors we have a school around the corner that provides leisure facilities to the public, we have hotels that open up to the public, we have hotels that open to the public or have reasonable access membership schemes, we have private gyms, dance studios	Competition	MO-NS	A
We are quite fortunate in Canterbury where we have not really had any major competitors, but I think next year, certainly the year after there will be a redevelopment across the road, and it will be a David Lloyd facility and we will have some fun there	Competition	MO-NS	A
We do have competition springing up and we don't want to alienate our customers, particularly as well introduce new themes and it is our genuine aim to try to exceed their expectations so we are trying to do that anyway but we could do a lot better, but I do not know if that really answers the question or helps, it is a bit of both	Competition	MO-NS	A
When we have a large private facility across the road, I hope that positioning will put in good stead at that time, people won't want to go and pay higher rates over the road, or we might have to reposition at that time	Competition	MO-NS	A
We have got quite a number, it is pretty much anybody that takes customers away from us	Competition	MO-NS	A
We deliberately don't allow people to put posters up whether it is for boot fairs, fun runs, we do have private gyms, there and anywhere	Competition	MO-NS	A
A lot of schools open up their halls now, so we have all sorts of competitors but they tend to be small scale, we don't have any comparable leisure facilities in the district, yet	Competition	MO-NS	A
The tendering process that we are currently stuck in is very limiting in the sense that you are either having to cut back meet requirements of contract which obviously affects marketing directly or you are reaching your targets and are the, which we are currently in, where we have the approach of no risks need be taken, hold everything back until the next bid, keep everything sort of up our sleeves to hit our immediate rivals to ensure that we meet our contract aim	Competition	MO-NS	A
Directly any sort of local leisure activity	Competition	MO-NS	A
Could be a local charity disco	Competition	MO-NS	A
It means all the kids are going to that rather than come skating, leisure in general, it's so wide nowadays, personal computers, people stay at home playing games rather than going out skating playing squash whatever	Competition	MO-NS	A
More choice generally speaking, so that means you can get a much wider range nowadays than you used to be, we will hold a slight monopoly with roller skating but other than that, that's hit by the local cinema if there is a major film that everyone wants to go and see then we can be hit badly, we have to look very carefully at local events	Competition	MO-NS	A
Competitors, it's quite interesting is that because again I've got, with the dual role, if I was still contracts manager it would be everybody	Competition	MO-NS	A
Would be looking at everything whether that's private sector, voluntary sector, local sports clubs local gyms, you name it everybody	Competition	MO-NS	A
I take it a little bit wider now in the fact we are competing completely with every leisure market	Competition	MO-NS	A
Not just a leisure centre, it's everything in leisure that you may want to do and that's people gardening, and it's people going to the cinema, so literally the wider field is everybody out there is a competitor	Competition	MO-NS	A
There are a couple of other swimming pools going out towards Rickmansworth and Hertfordshire Three Rivers area which will be considered to be probably our closest competitors	Competition	MO-NS	D
Some of those pools are purely local authority run, other ones such as Harrow is a private company in there which is running it on a CCT basis They are the major sort of people who we look at and see as customers	Competition	MO-NS	D
There are one or two private gyms as well, because Highgrove has a reasonable set up stand, gym and fitness	Competition	MO-NS	D
On the gym side some of our sports centres indeed, are competing for the customers to go there	Competition	MO-NS	D
The local private health clubs that are springing around us basically I mean we have got circling around us really and they can offer for the same as what we are charging for the facilities that are brand spanking new and offer every cury, we know that they are there and can't do anything about it	Competition	MO-NS	D
The commercial leisure centres in the borough Their facilities are more modern and offer the sort of products that are wanted by the public	Competition	MO-NS	D
When the King School closed for their extended refurbishment and maintenance, customers who came to us because they couldn't go there, a lot of them have stayed with us	Competition	MO-NS	A
I think we are totally, no no, we are not totally customer orientated, we are totally aware of the importance of customers, I think as an education through CCT, I think CCT had a lot of bad things, I think it had a lot of good things and one of the things I think was to turn around perceptions that we are here for the customers benefit and not here for our own benefit	Customer Orientation	MO-NS	C
I mean I wouldn't at profess to say that we are 100% customer orientated but we are aware of the value of customer and it is one of those things that you have to keep sort of plying and making sure that people do understand that that is what we are there for	Customer Orientation	MO-NS	C
It maybe our objectives on the client side aren't clearly specified enough to enable the contract to be managed more justly, but that is only a personal view.	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	B
What do you mean by the "system" (the system of Chelmsford BC) As far as Riverside is concerned there is a, the organisation has tried to give DSO's maximum operating freedom, because they have had to compete out in the market. So in that sense, that is quite good. We do have a public relations and marketing unit which actually doesn't do much in the way of marketing it's mainly public relations and press handling and things like that which seeks to exert influence over certain things that we do, really to ensure corporate livery which does present us with difficulties sometimes, but not insurmountable	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	B
Well not, I mean I think generally in terms of encouragement, I think the council's mission has quality within it and attention to detail and so on and so forth, but I mean in terms of real input to that not a great deal, but again that tends to be service driven	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	B
For example I mean, individual bits of the council will have pursued their own accreditation, I mean I think the only overall corporate sort of quality driven is investors in people	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	B
As a result of that its own, permeate through all aspects, I mean she is developing a role from a very recent start. So it is an effective one so it has to pervade all areas	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	B
Information, I mean it's all the leaflets that you'd generally expect from centres, we've got excellent links with the Community Centre Management, which always comes in useful	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	B
We've got four promotional events this week linking in with other peoples events, purely from having those sort of contacts and obviously the Council, because we are part of the Council, we've got all the internal emails that go to every member of the Council	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	B
We also got hotels and tourist information places in the centre	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	B
It has to be conditions, have to be, one of the big things is the fact that the old local authority mentality shouldn't	Interfunctional	MO-NS	C



avail and by that I will exaggerate to make the point, we don't want to put an advert in the paper or do a leaflet drop : don't take a report to committee that three months later that we get the decision to agree to go with it	coordination		
think that the conditions have to be flexible, I think that they have to be trusting in management on the ground floor respond to changing markets, customer bases and get on and do what they have to do	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	C
would like someone to give me a magic solution for that one I think and I don't know whether video conferencing or owing certain things or whatever it may be, so I think getting that consistency across the board in some way would beneficial, and in some way engendering a sense of pride in the staff in what they are doing, and again probably I wishful thinking here, but to try and get in the staff of the importance of their job, because I think sometimes that a y a who sits on the pool for 6 hours or cleans out toilets for 4 hours a day, or sets out gymnastics equipment - 6 hours a day doesn't always realise the valuable and important part of his work, and that is part of the management oblem and I am not sure how you address that other than in a longer term	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	C
ere's lots of different methods that we use, one of my responsibilities is putting together a marketing plan, marketing ategy for the next two to three years, and that's sort of the basis, and then other action plans from that will be, the ntres will be involved in and then we will be reviewing them on a periodic basis	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	C
o I think that helps to make sure that I'm writing this marketing strategy and then here, here you go you will be tually implementing it, its making sure that everyone is involved, and it will also you know, not just something it's, it will change so as things happen in the market place, you have to be prepared for that	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	C
'hat we don't have and something that has been referenced very very recently in fact is a customer policy, is a stomer services policy and that's something. I don't know if that's come out of other meetings, but I personally think it's maybe an area we need to develop further pulling everything together into a formal kind of policy. A lot of it we : doing, but not under that banner of customer services policy if you like	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	C
ay the biggest, we have got a very good marketing co-ordinator, very knowledgeable and very able and does work the best of her abilities in supporting the centres	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	C
ut that basically comes about from you know one individual actually produced the end tangible product although a of people might contribute to that	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	C
I say the conditions would be making sure people are part of the process, and it isn't just one individual subscribing, prescribing rather to others how things should be done	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	C
he focus, everybody had an opportunity to contribute to the customer focus for example, and that would then, once it has been agreed that has been communicated back, to them and that would form part of the appraisal meeting	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	C
o every time we are setting key result areas for individuals, reference would be to you know the focus of the ilding, why are we here, what are our objectives really and how does that fit in to your job	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	C
ut it proves a point for us to our political masters but, you know But if you start leisure is great in Hillingdon they ll start ranking at the top	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	D
There is another sort of, what has happened at the same time, we have had another post created within the client side a sports development officer, and this is down to the person themselves her name is Hazel, and she is very hustastic and she is very good, and what she tends to do she has met all the staff, and this sounds wrong, but it isn't can she is meeting staff coming at a different angle if you like	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	D
o what has happened, is Hazel has come in and because of the sports development work she is doing, she needs to k to the staff on site about things she wants to do, and things they want to do, but on top of that she is sort of also ing other things with her about marketing, about other things that we are doing	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	D
would agree with that, since Hazel has been around Again, it has been part of this, almost re-education process, ning back within one department and all working together And it did cause some teething problems, when " who is s coming in and telling us this that and the other and this is my line manager " and I think people now understand, it : taken that sort of suspicion away, we are all part of the same department we are all doing for the right reasons and ink we are still in that transitional stage hopefully we will get towards of that phase	Interfunctional coordination	MO-NS	D
here is normally a mission statement by each administration which we have to take into account Basically it is stained in the introduction to the sports and recreation strategy	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	D
's also broader that the local issues, I mean we have got funding outside, and people have said what is your strategy the future, and we haven't had one Now we have, its a different game	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	D
mean we haven't been able to bid directly for lottery money, but we have assisted schools, colleges and there was : that didn't get it and one of the reasons quoted was the fact that there was no leisure strategy We have just, put in ther one for another school, but we did have a strategy, although in draft form So we are waiting to see, still iting to see, what's going to happen to that But without it you are sunk, can't do it	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	D
o, absolutely not Because it covers, not just, the marketing budget which I have not just those sites but the other dry :s as well, golf courses, leisure card, basically we are moving money between budgets anyway It is not enough	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	D
hat I have to do if I do anything that can be termed as marketing I have to resource it from pinching money from ewhere	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	D
ne of the things, I mean Eric is not even aware of this yet, is that there is a report going up to the next Leisure Sub mmittee, about a marketing strategy because I have got a sport and rec strategy for you that is part of it And one of things that we are recommending all to do with the problems of the co-ordinated department is set up a marketing n drawn from both elements of the organisation. Now until that is done I don't think we can make a really erted bid for more funding But if we can say look we have got our act together, these are all the things that we nt to do, spend this, we get this, that's what members like to hear, then I think we have got a better chance of getting edicated budget	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	D
st found a gap, had some money, lets build a pool. No real thought about how much it is going to be used, but vadays, if you see any longer applications you have to predict all of this in advance and that is the difference.	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	D
ow that's between, we work together and we didn't fall out about it but it just shows you what problems we had., and course now we sit together a lot closer, we have started to get a bit of benefit from that now. Well we had a major greement about the contract, because we felt that marketing was included and we felt that the contractor should ertake marketing although it was a very difficult thing to quantify and Eric from his position had no other option to say hang on a minute, this is budget driven as far as we are concerned, we have no responsibility for that, we n had to call in the Borough solicitor to actually adjudicate, because the specification wasn't clear enough	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	D
c've suffered, before CCT there was a Leisure Department, stand alone, own directorate, could fight its own battles erns of the budget round and everything	Interfunctional Coordination	MO-NS	D
ell my view is that it has got to be accepted from the top, for what you are trying to do and that sometimes you e to change the way you provide the services, the way you treat your customers and that in fact is all about the ge of the product, and the other problem was that because the lack of investment about the way in which our ducts were received in the community	Responsiveness	MOSQ	D
most areas yes, but there are some other areas such as marketing, but perhaps staff training to an extent and actually ing enough time to spend with the staff to make sure everybody is trained in exactly the same way to provide that : of service that we are looking for	Responsiveness	MOSQ	D
hey are communicated with and have the communication to hand they can respond positively and accurately to the	Responsiveness	MOSQ	D



customer's requests			
gain it's a hindrance because we can't actually, we are given a really restricted budget as managers and if you put a proposal for instance, if you wanted to do a new health suite or even put a new carpet down because the customers are saying that the carpet looks threadbare or whatever, you have to go through such a rigmarole to get any funds released replace that if you can't get it out of your normal budget, invariably you can't do much out of your normal budget or you just can't do any improvements	Responsiveness	MOSQ	D
here is a hold on maintenance, I mean it's really really bad so even to get a new lock on the door it's very difficult it can take months	Responsiveness	MOSQ	D
gain I don't think that the system helps at all, I think it purely hinders in that anything we as operators of the sites that we wish to implement within the centres to do with marketing publicity wise on customers, respond from customers comments and things we then have to go back to our client department cap in hand, can you do this yes or no, and at the moment on the whole the answers are no, there isn't the finances there	Responsiveness	MOSQ	D
because in terms of facilities alone the best we have got to offer is a building that was built in the mid 60's and there is actually a problem with that	Tangibles	MOSQ	D
but we had a structural problem, which was caused by the advent of CCT and the way in which the contract was set up, marketing fell between the two	CCT	MX	D
but there are other facilities out there which are provided by the private centre which we need to compete with Again depends upon the sort of the different units within the centre, obviously swimming has got more of a monopoly position in Chelmsford, whereas other areas such as fitness, the marketing effort has to be greater to actually win the are of the market	Competition	MX	B
our competitors are, and again it depends very much again on the area of the centre that you are looking at we treat our bars and catering as very much as a service to our customers coming in, we don't look at those as local competition. But when you look at the sports hall, we have got a number of sports halls locally. If you look at the ice rink, our nearest ice rink is Lee Valley or Romford, and they are our competitors, but perhaps is quite a distance for us, we would pick up from East Anglia so I think we are in quite a good position there. If you take the swimming, we are the only swimming pool in Chelmsford. Having said that we do know of a private company that's opening up over the road in December, so we are very wary of that. We do know that New Hall school has just opened a swimming pool and we have lost part of the swimming club to there, whether they have got public opening times I don't know but the end of the day, I am very pleased with what we have got here, we have got a very big pool, people like that so I think from a swimming point of view we are market leaders locally although we haven't got very much competition	Competition	MX	B
you then take the gym, now we do know there is 2 or 3 other gyms around locally, they have hit our financial figures quite heavily because they are a private club	Competition	MX	B
one of that is snobbishness people do like to belong to a private club, but again we've reacted to that we are looking at payment schemes, we're not allowed under the contract to have a membership scheme but we can certainly have a payment scheme and we are looking at that	Competition	MX	B
we know competition in the future is going to be quite tough because we have got a private company going in across the road in December	Competition	MX	B
here is another leisure facility being built on the old Chelmsford football club site so competition is high	Competition	MX	B
one of things you might like to raise when go down there, is that just across the road Pinnacles are building a big new health club which opens in December, so, major new competitor, so now what I know Catherine is eager to develop is a marketing strategy which basically gets ahead of the game	Competition	MX	B
you're right, you know, what it's going to be, we know that it's coming, we know it's offers, it's prices	Competition	MX	B
experience shows us the major private sector operators, as would be operators of our facilities	Competition	MX	B
of course there are then the private sector operators who are specifically geared to the health and fitness market you know I've just mentioned	Competition	MX	B
there's another big operator which has opened up a while back, and of course we operate other sports centres ourselves in Chelmsford, but they tend to be a different scale and cater for different things	Competition	MX	B
what I mean in terms of sector that is true, but I mean competition for the leisure pound is massive, you know, what we do, go to the cinema, go to the swimming pool, go ice skating	Competition	MX	B
we are in a very competitive market and like most council services, if you want to make planning application for a council house you know, there isn't another organisation you can go to, and a lot of the services that the council provide people don't actually pay for directly and so we have to compete in a way that is unusual for councils, but is so within a huge leisure market from going to the local pub to whatever, and it is a real market place, which council's are not really particularly well geared up to being	Competition	MX	B
our competitors vary Bramston's have got a swimming pool, Maldon, which is our nearest competitor where swimming is concerned. We have the Fitness First which opened up about a year ago which is a private gym. That is considered as, I think it has to be considered as a competitor, but at the same time we've actually found that a lot of customers coming back because they are not happy with the facility that they are provided with there. Ice rinks, our nearest competitor is Romford, but because going in the other the direction we have not really got a competitor to worry about. I mean Lee Valley and Romford are pretty much going towards London, so they compete with each other if anything and the nearest one after that is Peterborough, so from that point of view Ice Rinks we are quite lucky locally. We have got a private club opening up over the road in December which will have a swimming pool, and I think that will be our biggest competitor once it opens. So you do sort of look at, once again look in the areas of what we provide. From the point of view of the sports hall, with certain facilities we should consider William De Feres and Dovedales as competitors, but I don't necessarily believe that they are competitors because William De Feres is pretty much catering for Southwood and Feres and Dovedales pretty much caters for a slightly different product to what we do. We both provide badminton, you will generally find that somebody and bit more, and you know they are coming in here for something else already then they are likely to come down here. Dovedales is you know, part of a dual college facility, so that pretty much is facilitated by that. So, I think because of the size of the venue we need to look at competitors depending upon departments	Competition	MX	B
every local authority and private sector within about a 10 mile radius of our operation	Competition	MX	C
I think that we view as our direct competitors those people are in our similar market local adjacent sports centres, particularly the private sector, health club facilities, we then look at alternative, external entertainment such as cinemas, ten pin bowling and so on as the next form of competitor and finally, well not finally but thirdly is the, the competitor is home entertainment, television, video computers, and I would suggest if I wanted to be clever that the biggest competitor is apathy	Competition	MX	C
I mean at one time you probably wouldn't think that local authorities could compete but because we have had such an investment in our facilities and we are trying to look commercially and branding, and now we have got, what we have is Beaumont's Health Club which is our health and fitness brand, and every time a new centre comes on line, we implement those concepts and I think that's what is different to most local authorities that we do sort of see things	Competition	MX	C

commercially and look at what our customers want, and I think we have been very successful and we have had one private club opened up in Potters Bar more or less at the same time as our first sports centre was reopening and we took a lot of business from them and they are struggling and we good facilities at a reasonable price and customers like that, and so we are getting even the top end of the market, that people that want the prestige but still see the facilities as just good at a slightly better price			
so yes definitely private health clubs but also anything could be our competition I mean it's the leisure pound as well, people also want to go to the cinema or all those other complexes and spend their money there, especially kids and youth which is one of our markets that we don't seem to attract because they just want to go play on the video machines and things like that, so they don't want to go into our centre to be fit and healthy and also we don't have the facilities or the environment to cater for what they want	Competition	MX	C
so yes, all the entertainment and big complexes are our competition as well, and bowling and things like that	Competition	MX	C
and other little, like even schools now put on sports halls and run kids activities in the holidays and that is our market as well, and they are our competition	Competition	MX	C
but the big one is the health clubs	Competition	MX	C
olves Place is just about to open in Borehamwood, so they will be a major competitor in terms of the fitness market, and in the fullness of time, but the Hawkesmoor at the moment	Competition	MX	C
and say the Hatfield Centre Swim Centre, Barnet Copal, The Furzfield Centre in Potters Bar, Harrow Leisure Centre, some extent the Mike Heighly centre, maybe to a lesser extent, but they've got quite a small segment of the market maybe that are impinging upon our provision at the moment	Competition	MX	C
probably Barnet Copal, and Hatfield Swim Centre are the major two, and indeed our own sites	Competition	MX	C
from the point of view of Highgrove we are fairly near the Harrow boundary and we have a huge sports centre in Harrow which takes some of our customers and there is another swimming pool at Northolt which is fairly close by and we compete with them	Competition	MX	D
there's obviously competitors who are providing similar services to us in Chelmsford, particularly the health and fitness market. There's other local authorities across neighbouring local authorities which provide similar services to us, but obviously we've got overlapping catchment areas. There's also non sports activities which are obviously biting on peoples sort of leisure time. You know, theatres, ten pin bowling, things that we don't offer here, are potentially pulling our customers away from us because they offer an alternative service so there are those three areas really.	Competition	MX	B
what do see of it, well it's a huge area of work. Well, basically marketing, there are many definitions, but it's basically terms of the sport and recreation side is trying to find out what my customers want and trying to satisfy them, and I suppose in a business environment trying to maximise income at the same time So that's it overall what I would see marketing as.	Definition	MX	B
well our markets for this particular centre are wide and varied and encompass right from the very young to the very old. We can't be specific because we offer so many facilities	Definition	MX	B
from the point of view of the ice rink, it takes marketing on a wider view, so from my point of view marketing takes forms of advertisement, from internal and external, actual press release, obviously newspapers local radio	Definition	MX	B
so I mean, we do from our point of view in marketing take on the whole what sort of span of what we can possibly do and also obviously market research and what our customer's want, and also what the staff think about the product we are providing	Definition	MX	B
the role of marketing is basically to make sure that the public for which you are providing a service, (a) you know who you should be providing that service for, (b) you know what they actually want and, (c) you are listening to them, and they know when it's going on, where it's going on and what's going on	Definition	MX	B
an expansive question to start off with isn't, marketing, any of vehicles and any other of conceptions as to what relates to marketing, I think it can be classified as creating and sustaining demand on one level and tapping into latent demand on another	Definition	MX	C
just about, it's the old Ford cliché isn't it, "everything we do is driven by you" and we subscribe to that	Definition	MX	C
now do you mean the "role of marketing", (Q What's the role of marketing for the major centres) The role of marketing for both our major and minor centres is quite simply to maximise throughput, at a price which is considered to be value for money	Definition	MX	C
think that in everything that we do I would not like to classify it as marketing or management or service provision I think that everything has to be integrated in all actions that we take with a mind to promoting our service and providing a quality of service which using the cliché meets and exceeds customer expectations	Definition	MX	C
so I think that anything that we do whether it is direct marketing or indeed administrative work it all has an impact on the promotion of the facilities	Definition	MX	C
well there is an old adage that 50% of marketing is wasted, but the trouble is identifying which 50% is wasted and I think one of the intangibles within management is effectively determining whether you are being effective in terms of your promotion	Definition	MX	C
assertion time really on that one, the role of marketing is, I am trying to think of a fancy definition but if I can say that the role of marketing is to ensure that the policies and priorities laid down by the authority are achieved, then that is not bad I see it as I said earlier, marketing I don't differentiate necessarily between marketing management and publicity service and service delivery, I think they are all so intergrained so really marketing is very much supporting everything that we do and that it is to achieve the priorities, the objectives of the authority whether that be in terms of financial objectives percentage number of residents using the facilities, percentage number of women, people with disabilities people disadvantaged in whatever way. So I see it integral to delivering the priorities and policies of the authority	Definition	MX	C
say it's not about just about producing a brochure or putting an ad together, but it's a whole, it's a total concept of meeting customers needs, finding out what they are and trying to satisfy them the best way we can	Definition	MX	C
see it as getting customers and retaining customers	Definition	MX	C
I see marketing as a much bigger function than simply letting our customers know what we are doing	Definition	MX	C
customer retention I think is very important there, because obviously people are, retaining our existing customers as they must be quite happy with the product, although that is a bit of an assumption because they might not have gone elsewhere	Definition	MX	C
terms of what takes place or what I perceive marketing to be? (rpt Q) My view of marketing is that we speak to customers find out what customers needs are, advertise the centres and make sure that publicity is of a good standard that the local community know that the centre exists and what goes on in those centres	Definition	MX	D
I think marketing is about letting local people know what you've got on offer and how you compare to other facilities really	Definition	MX	D
marketing, well in the general sense of the word, is everything to do with assessing what you are providing including market research, promotion, analysing your customer's trends, income, the product that you are providing, whether you are meeting the needs of the community	Definition	MX	D
yes, I agree with what Alan said, very much the same, my main concern is the push to sell the product which is what	Definition	MX	D

are providing for the public, and to that end we are probably not doing true marketing, we are doing a limited amount and that's about in some centres the extent of it			
hat do I see as marketing, I see marketing for the sports and recreation centres as getting out there to the local population and let them know exactly what you've got on offer and where you are because I think just concentrating on a local area people really don't know where we are and a lot of the time they don't know what we've got to offer	Definition	MX	D
aving said that we do spend a considerable amount of money on marketing both advertising, market research, sort of a profit making marketing	Marketing communication	MX	B
gain our marketing tends to be, because we've got a big building here made up of three distinct buildings, the swimming being a local market, the sports hall being similarly a local market, although very much geared towards Telmsford, and then you've got the ice rink with their markets stretching out to Ipswich and Colchester and that sort of distance	Marketing communication	MX	B
ur general marketing approach is one of awareness especially to do with the ice rink because obviously that is a reasonable facility as well as we've got our advertising in our local papers where we know the majority of people read the local papers so we try and hit the local market in that way	Marketing communication	MX	B
would think that the tools that we have in place are not dissimilar to everybody else's, we have above the line techniques such as newspaper advertising, we dabble in radio advertising, brochures, posters and so on, more subtle approaches such as competitions and so and so forth	Marketing communication	MX	C
ll of it is geared towards reinforcing our various brands and ensuring some sort of brand loyalty	Marketing communication	MX	C
rink at the end of the organisation as a whole has got buy in to a marketing concept, it's one thing for me to bandy around with you buzz phrases, we can talk about strategic alliances and brand reinforcement	Marketing communication	MX	C
ecause I suspect that for every one resident out there in the streets who tells you that they are aware and participate there will another five or six who won't even know that a leisure exists and in some respects you have got to try and make the people out there want your product and very often that is not easy, and mechanisms for effective promotion are difficult to define, there are ways and means, I mean there is the cut of slip in a newspaper advert or the sort of appeals of customers as they come in and so on, are all mechanisms to sort of get there but if somebody I think had the way to 100% effective promotion they would be a millionaire by now because I think it is one of those intangible things and not easy as I say to measure all of the time	Marketing communication	MX	C
ell I think that we try and use a myriad of things and the usual things are sort of newspaper adverts and leaflets and ect mail, radio advert and we use a website as well, but I think that's a sort of, how can I say the hardware of it, I think it is very important to recognise the softer issues of marketing and that is that the place is accessible, physically, car parks and bus routes and so on, that it is open at the times when people want to come and use it that it is clean when you get there that the staff are in recognisable uniforms, that the programme meets people requirements that it is easy to sort of get round the building etc etc you can go on, and as I said before I think that the staff promote and market facility, not in sort of overt ways, you know, come and do an aerobics session, but in the sort of softer ways that make people feel comfortable and I remember somebody saying, and I have always clung onto it: "What we could be doing is to make every individual who walks through our centre think that the only reason that we have opened up is for him or her" and if you can sort of get that importance to people coming in that's not ignoring the people who do not come in then that is a hell of a good start that is	Marketing communication	MX	C
would like to try and support greater awareness of the benefits of participation, I'd probably like to get the opportunity to use a few more "disciples" and being doing some more face to face selling, I think that you can't get away from you know sitting down and speaking on a one to one basis with somebody and say well look just try it sort of thing	Marketing communication	MX	C
ou know, I will pick you up in my car, and I will take you into the centre and you can experience it. But this has course implications, and you know you have to be realistic on these issues and so generally speaking and being realistic there is not a great deal other than probably looking at it more longer term than within short time spans	Marketing communication	MX	C
at I think, with new facilities, we have image, we are looking at branding and everything else that we have to have things of a high standard, so it is important that you know, we don't just, because I have been in private health clubs where you get all this nice glossy stuff and then you get this tatty bit of paper, that has their, important information it is that you get an image of that, and you know we don't want to go down that route	Marketing communication	MX	C
that's supported by a whole host of publicity material which in itself I wouldn't see as marketing but it supports the marketing function	Marketing communication	MX	C
the role of marketing should be to increase public awareness but again at the moment there is just very very limited marketing taking place, it's just down to localised posters and leaflets. No research taking place or anything	Marketing Communication	MX	D
we've certainly improved things like, very simply development of free advertising through you know promotions and media exposure, which get us quite a lot of column inches in each paper, but we don't actually pay for them and so I think we are sort of on a mission of image improvement, which hopefully, well when you go through the questionnaire I will see a couple of things in there I mean the building is not a pretty building, it sits in a car park, it's an unpleasant looking structure, it's not terribly welcoming in terms of customer appeal	Marketing communication s	MX	B
viously from the point of view of marketing, is it just within the centre as you were saying? We've got information boards, we've got poster sites all around the whole centre	Marketing communication s	MX	B
it's a massive database of mailing out that goes on	Marketing communication s	MX	B
terms of the website, you can obviously look at the number of hits but I mean ours is a relatively new website and I think a couple of hundred hits in the first month or two but half of those could have come from America, I have no idea and of no interest whatsoever to the local people	Marketing communication s	MX	C
verall we rely on more subjective means rather than sort of more objective measurements of how successful it is	Measurement	MX	B
ell I suppose in terms of, there is obviously buns on seats in terms of numbers through the door, and that's sort of a quantitative measure that I would say that people like me have been relying on for too long	Measurement	MX	B
we have, our financial systems here mean that our income has to equate to our expenditure so, you know the most important thing to us is the income and we obviously have to monitor that on a regular basis to make sure that the income is coming in and if the income is not coming in then we have to adjust as it were	Measurement	MX	B
ll again, when you look at marketing, you can never seem to get an actual financial return on what you are investing and that is, that's difficult I think to assess	Measurement	MX	B
cause, where you, you know if you are investing x amount of pounds it's nice to see a return of why, and when you are looking at marketing you can't actually see that and that is one of the things I would like to see where we are doing certain promotions we actually see what our expenses are and what our return is, in any form whether it is a small form of cheaper price or a deal or a deal with somebody else, I think we need to see what we are putting in and what we are getting out and trying to assess the way forward	Measurement	MX	B
ll again, as I said earlier it's difficult to actually do that, we do know that we are a busy and successful centre	Measurement	MX	B

But again that's very difficult to assess in figure terms	Measurement	MX	B
Having said that, our attendances are going up and I mean I would like to be able to put figures to it, but I can't at this stage, it would be nice to but I can't	Measurement	MX	B
Having said that it would be nice to see financial returns on some items to see how much we may get back	Measurement	MX	B
Having said that I mean are dealing with nearly 1 million through the door, so we can't doing anything to bad	Measurement	MX	B
We are talking about developing some new measures, these are always a bit difficult. Some of these include things like marketing spend per visitor, I mean this is just the first list that we produced a while ago and this is best value orientated. But trying to play the dangerous game of cost ratios which take marketing spend into account and trying to focus it down on specific areas	Measurement	MX	B
But what we think we are trying to develop is more targeted objective measurement, you know was really packaged, as this year's summer programme for kids more beneficial across all sorts of measures and what were the reasons and why to develop ways of analysing that	Measurement	MX	B
mean you can develop all sorts of figures but actually what do they mean is very difficult sometimes	Measurement	MX	B
Keep a list of things I have actually advertised throughout papers and press releases that have gone out through the radio station. We obviously keep an eye on the figures of attendance	Measurement	MX	B
If I change a style a leaflet I will also keep, I mean I will speak to the instructors as well as keeping an eye on the figures, I don't just do it by computer	Measurement	MX	B
It's mainly a case of looking at the figures of people that are coming in, but also finding out if people are actually aware about it so, because we have got the people at the council that are not actually here, it's quite easy sometimes just, if you are going down there to do something else just to speak to people and see if they are aware of something that you have done recently	Measurement	MX	B
Yes, I think it goes back to what I was saying earlier some of those things aren't as easy as I think you would like to make them, there are a couple or two or three ways of doing it, I have mentioned the sort of cut off slip on the leaflet that you send out that is the definite measurable thing there is the customer or the non customer did you see this in the newspaper or did you get this leaflet through your door and so you become aware of it and therefore did you use it so you can measure again the effectiveness of that	Measurement	MX	C
My primary indicator is throughput, and by extension turnover, then that has got to be the most important indicator	Measurement	MX	C
We can throw in if you like positive customer comments as a % of throughput, but in reality you can't hide from the figures that your bank produce and I believe genuinely that whilst it might be unfashionable to look at that one primary indicator that's really what it's about and it has to done in conjunction with an optimisation of expenditure, not a minimisation, but an optimisation and always we are quite prepared to accumulate and quite prepared to look at the bottom line in terms of whether our investment has been worthwhile. In other words the bottom line has got to go forward each year, everything else being equal	Measurement	MX	C
So you have to qualify any measuring mechanism with the knowledge that you know it may not be as it seems, i.e. 20 people hitting our website are not 200 extra swimmers, does not work like that	Measurement	MX	C
Suppose at the end of the day it is to determine if you have achieved the objectives that you have achieved in your business plan and those objectives can be measured as I think I said earlier in terms of finances, in terms of number of people using the building number of new activities that you have introduced your meeting targets for various target groups if you have got those etc Now that is a fairly glib answer because what you could say is right, don't spend a penny on marketing, just don't spend anything and go for a year and by that I mean a penny on advertising and promotion as opposed to marketing in the bigger picture, don't spend a penny and see what happens and it would be quite fascinating if you would be prepared to take that risk, I think as I say I don't think we could ever give up this sort of internal marketing, you know the quality of service, the staff delivering the good service and being polite etc but I would love to have the guts one year to say right we spend in the region of a quarter of a million pounds on marketing, that includes staff uniforms and one or two other bits and pieces. But I would love to say you are only going to have 125k this year and I want you to achieve the same results as the year before. I takes a brave person to do that but it could be very interesting to see whether it would still work out and I don't know	Measurement	MX	C
I am true to what I say, i.e. the biggest marketing plus that you can have are the staff and the word of mouth in any respects that does not cost you anything in terms of marketing and yet we push out leaflets and newspaper adverts etc etc but interesting point, but I am not so sure that I am brave enough to test that theory	Measurement	MX	C
We have a marketing campaign or an advertising campaign in the papers some of the things we do will be like an offer or bring this ad in so we can tell how many responses we've had	Measurement	MX	C
Suppose ultimately we measure it in terms of throughput, you know year on year, attendances, monthly attendances against profiled targets	Measurement	MX	C
We are doing particular campaigns we would measure that through you know responses to those campaigns, we could measure it through our customer comments, if they're being reduced or people are commenting on the fact that we've had this wonderful initiative we'd measure it through user forums, we'd measure it through just interaction with customers, we'd measure it through the impact it might have on other centres if we are using say a theatre to cross sell their youth market an activity that we might be putting on. We'd possibly need to communicate with them	Measurement	MX	C
We don't necessary involve particular formulas in terms of marketing budget compared to income for example which now other centres might use to benchmark, or you know to have some idea of performance indicators. But we would really look on it as throughput, customer retention	Measurement	MX	C
We run campaigns solely at, looking at customer retention and we will monitor at the pre and post, the retention programmes how the customer base how the customer compares and whether we have in fact retained customers, what their activity pattern has been throughout that period	Measurement	MX	C
So you can't just compare performance this year with last year and just say we need to inflate our marketing budget by 10	Measurement	MX	C
I think probably, probably I'd like to stop the clock as well, as have a small resource that enabled a marketing manager Riverside to actually take different units of staff just to one side for a while and say right, for the next day you haven't got to work on poolside, you haven't got to clean the changing rooms, you haven't got to do this, or do that, here's our prices, there's our programme, there's our performance in different areas, there's our competition, here's a VOT analysis of the service that we operate of the swimming pools that I've just done. In other words take them out and try to actually sharpen up their mind set so that ideally there would be a lot of useful feed back from that one that therefore could start to work with them to start to improve	Motivation	MX	B
That isn't the time when you drag staff away from the operating side and say right, I'd like you all to sit in this room and talk about marketing for the day	Motivation	MX	B
So they are operating in a very difficult set of circumstances it has to be said and you know the people who look at it they dispassionately say well, you've got to open at 6 o'clock in the morning, you've got to run the place through to 11:30 at night, you know the pools, the swimming pools have got to be up to a given standard, you know you got to have certain levels of staffing here and so on and so on and so on. Nobody ever says you've got to take time out for marketing	Motivation	MX	B
I would have thought probably the most important thing is an attitude within staff that is sensitive the important	Motivation	MX	B

le that marketing has to play within the function of the place			
ou know if you've got that sort of attitude in ideally all of your staff then you are starting from a position where you a, well hopefully, you've got less of a marketing problem and if you have got issues of a marketing kind that would ed to be addressed then you've got people that who are (1) motivated to achieving improvement and (2) and derstand how we need to do it	Motivation	MX	B
is a separate issue altogether to if you like instil into all of our employees a marketing culture which puts the stomer first which instils them with the desire to go that extra mile in satisfying our customer's needs and aspirations	Motivation	MX	C
s a need for them to recognise that they are very much a part of the marketing equation, and also to move away from s concept that marketing happens at head office and the real world applies here	Motivation	MX	C
o that is a problem with the system if you like, the lack of recognition from others as the importance of the rketting function	Motivation	MX	C
ut such is my commitment to marketing and the various facets therein, that I believe anecdotally that we would make ifference	Motivation	MX	C
hings like pricing, the council could be trying to affect pricing to achieve social objectives to try to get a wider range people in Chelmsford into the building that maybe can't afford to use some of the facilities	Positioning	MX	B
rationale for that? The rationale is, because it's a regional centre in the town, it's very much a pay and play facility, d what they didn't want to do is to have a membership scheme where people pay a membership fee and have cheaper mission charges. They would prefer to have one fee and work it in that way	Positioning	MX	B
c do offer reduced fees for students and that sort of thing and in I think that will actually extend further as time goes that we will introduce, in fact I think within the next 2 or 3 years we will be looking at things like residents cards d give them a cheaper fee but the authority don't want to do a membership fee	Positioning	MX	B
Can you vary them mid week, weekend etc? Yes, as DSO manager I've got complete authority and in fact one of the blems we've got at the moment, not a problem but some of our charges are linked to certain charges, now I will e you an example, our adult swimming charge is linked to our club charge, so if we wanted to put our club charge e need to put our adult swim charge up, OK but there is nothing to stop me putting that charge up and then ring swimming at a lower charge and in fact that is what I'm actually quite looking to do is to, because I want the ximum income from the clubs and to then encourage the regular users to come more by reducing fee	Positioning	MX	B
hink it's enabled us to put together some more cohesive packaging as well	Positioning	MX	B
s very easy to increase income by simply increasing prices, whilst price has got to be, has got to sit comfortably if e like with the aspirations of our user base, it is about increasing throughput and thereafter increasing turnover	Positioning	MX	C
at that the end product or the end service matches up to the levels and the quality of marketing that you push out	Positioning	MX	C
ally we could do with putting more money towards marketing we could actually do with a dedicated officer and	Resources	MX	A
ually commit a budget more towards it, it will repay back in its time			
s the profits start coming back in then possibly the generation of monies back into marketing, but marketing and ining are the two that I'd see that we need to improve on	Resources	MX	A
c set aside, and again it is down to the bid whatever bid you are putting together, to put a marketing figure together, the bottom line is if we were looking at say a different mode of operating say for example trust status, I would disage that our marketing, and again I said marketing and training, I'd say that marketing could possibly expand efold and training tenfold. So there are two issues I would definitely look at if there was a different approach to rating services that would have a lot more funding put towards it	Resources	MX	A
iving said that I think we do do exceptionally well on what resources we have at the moment, but it could be proved upon but obviously the nub of it as well is potentially measuring the success or not of that marketing anyway I that marketing effort, so, but I could talk all day on that one and talk pros and cons and fors and against	Resources	MX	A
ain if we had bigger budgets or more time if you like than we have at present, more time in terms of the length of tracts and the flexibility to perhaps make bigger losses or lower surpluses then we would like to spend a lot more staff training so if we had a bit more leeway our marketing effort could be a lot greater	Resources	MX	A
ey are working within a flexible operation so obviously with income, they have got a marketing budget, they are t of a business unit, to some extent it is a vicious circle they can only call upon additional resources if they can erate that through additional income and I think that is potentially is a problem, and that is where sometimes the nt side we can contribute resources particularly to areas such as customer surveys, because that's where obviously ormation not just purely at a sort of business level it's of interest, in terms of strategic interest to the council as a ole	Resources	MX	B
e've just recently invested in a marketing manager and the way we manage the building is very much allow those ior managers to look at their areas and discuss their budgets. If they feel they are adequate or inadequate then we discuss that further.	Resources	MX	B
m looking for my marketing manager to argue the case and talk to me about additional marketing if she actually is that she actually wants it	Resources	MX	B
on't have a problem with making a resource available provided there is a return and obviously the marketing budget ery difficult to assess the return on it	Resources	MX	B
ee I took over we've increased the staffing levels from a part time marketing person to a full time marketing nager a brand new post and really previously to me being here or me taking over as manager we very much ran the lding as a two management approach, myself as the deputy manager and the manager because we had to force gs through	Resources	MX	B
ll, crucial really, it relies on the customers and the money that comes in and therefore the marketing process is key hat. Catherine Howley is the marketing manager one of the three senior managers at the centre now, so I suppose t reflects how important it is as you know the key feature of the way the place operates	Resources	MX	B
ver, we always want more money in marketing, my budget is around the £30k mark, that is excluding printing	Resources	MX	B
s actually, compared to other positions that I have held for marketing, it's the best budget I have actually had, it is quate, but you could do so much more with a little bit more money at the end of the day	Resources	MX	B
If you would add the printing what would the budget be? I'm assessing that at the moment, because, I think you looking at the £50k mark, but it has been put in with the stationary budget so that needs to be split up	Resources	MX	B
hink it is a perception thing that if there are going to be cuts then they should be marketing cuts and we as local ority operators are not in the business of producing sexy adverts or glossy brochures, although the converse is in lity true	Resources	MX	C
ould say no, but every marketer would say no but we don't do to badly, we'd like more	Resources	MX	C
hink largely, and again I think its not just about marketing budgets you have to be able to reconcile those with ning budgets, and again it is all part and parcel of the same equation	Resources	MX	C
hink so, my own opinion that is I mentioned £250k for centres, altogether for the centres we've got and a little bit at a centre, that's not centrally controlled, but it is available to the centres and it is divvied out and you will see how it one when you get the paperwork. and my opinion is yes, that that is adequate, I have to say that the financial	Resources	MX	C

gets of the centres is quite challenging and if you measured it in terms of just finance they do a damn good job, and re I say there the other softer issues of marketing and so on, and so I think that we have an adequate budget, and in t we have good fight, myself and Chris, well I have only been here a couple of budget setting years so far, but he is rt of, if you take £50k off I have to take of £150 the income type of thing, and it goes back to what we were talking out before it would be nice to experiment one year, and just say well look you know, you are more effective with £00k than you are with £250k and you will be OK			
n, no obviously. I think the awareness of marketing especially with our competition because we have private health bs being launched right on our door steps and so we have to be competitive and they are doing a six week campaign d that's what customers are seeing and they are not seeing anything from us then obviously you know they will look that and join them	Resources	MX	C
I suggest the only potential problem there is the lack of additional resources, so we are relying on one person marketing) to deliver a hell of a lot, and we are delivering a lot, I don't know if you whether you've had access to formation, and the web site and just publicity and research and the strategic marketing plan is all being put together	Resources	MX	C
he other problem with the system is, obviously we are under quite a lot of financial pressure as a local authority so erybody's budget every unit, paired, will be scrutinised in terms of their budget, and marketing is unfortunately is an easy option to cut down on funds, because it's cutting back on say publicity material, proactive marketing an probably an easier target than say reducing or eliminating a member of staff at another centre or actually cutting ck on service delivery	Resources	MX	C
ould say no, and our centre budget for this year is fairly tight in marketing terms and I know at head office it has eeked slightly to account for marketing, and I think Hertsmere as an authority are going through a quite a big period change, where we are enhancing our facilities, we are adding to them, so there haven't been any constants if you like er the last three, four, or five years	Resources	MX	C
think in terms of marketing for this particular site I mean because I am in quite a fortunate position because we have the capital budget an element of funding available to launch the rest of the building, and the ongoing marketing and omoting of what is happening here we can manage quite adequately	Resources	MX	C
he marketing budget is actually held by the client officers, therefore Hayes and Highgrove pools do not have any rking budgets whatsoever	Resources	MX	D
'hen you say system, do you mean bureaucracy that type of thing? Being a local authority (laughed) we do have ngs that we think that the customer has either requested or we feel would give a better service sometimes we can't o place because of red tape and it has to go through committees so time delays can occur because we have to get proval so we can't always react to the market or if a private health club is doing something and we want to either low suit or do something even better we have to go through various channels and it can cause delays and money is o a factor	Responsiveness	MX	C
was going to say, I actually don't have a marketing budget	Responsiveness	MX	D
'e are so conscious of the fact that we haven't done any marketing, any sort of major promotion, we are more ncerned at getting the message out there, and we don't know what effect it is having	Responsiveness	MX	D
e actually changed that and we've now got a management team of 6 or 7 managers and because we've invested in a rking manager then I foresee that marketing function working more closely with the managers and the marketing ction being critical of the facilities and the opening hours that we are operating obviously for the benefit of the stomers that are coming through the door	Structure	MX	B
ean when we changed the marketing manager all I do is discuss it with Head of Leisure, and he might agree or agree, but I argued my case and he agreed so I don't have a problem with that	Structure	MX	B
I felt that by appointing a marketing company or a having additional staff here even on a short term basis would p then I have got the authority to do that and, as long at the end of the day the budgets balance	Structure	MX	B
ell I like to think that we have improved those just recently. We've appointed a marketing manager as a part of the ior management for the first time	Structure	MX	B
ior to that we had an approach where the different main elements of the centre, the dry side, the wet side and the ice k tended to do their own product development, not exactly in isolation but looking within largely within sort of the r walls as it were their own bit of the facility and I think that meant that probably that our offer came across to the blic as a little bit disjointed and what I think we have brought to the thing with the marketing managers appointment somebody who's able to perhaps stand back and take a more global view and I think to the benefit, actually to ping to sort of help the individual venue managers within the overall centre	Structure	MX	B
ut I mean I like to think that we are moving in the right direction. Certainly the appointment of the marketing mager is a major step in the right direction	Structure	MX	B
atherine is you know one of the three senior managers at the centre, and so marketing has its place at the top table t of thing	Structure	MX	B
ould probably have a bigger budget, I might have an additional marketer, I would look closely at in situ marketing ources in our centres whether it is IT and Corel Draw - is it Corel Draw, I don't know I am not sure to dedicated rking individuals so what we would ideally have is a central marketing department in tandem if you like with icated marketers in each centre and a bigger budget which would reflect that	Structure	MX	C
nd one of the things that I often talk about that I was going to say unique and forgive me if it is not unique but in nis of sport and leisure we are the only service that a council offers where it is entirely at the discretion of the stomer. Nobody has to come into our sports centres and swimming pools	Structure	MX	C
nd so there is a great deal of empowerment, (use that word loosely because I know it is another jargon word) a great al of empowerment to the on site managers and the head of operations who looks after all the sports centres and imming pools to get on and do what is effective without interference from sort of "the council", the "municipal" dy and I think that that can be demonstrated you know tangibly in so far that we have developed individual logos individual centres and whilst there is still a requirement to recognise the council's role within the centres that is servient to the big logo that fits each individual building, so I think that they recognise the importance of the tres being seen as accessible and not sort of civic buildings as I think that can be sort of off putting, I don't think t the corporate body adds a great deal of value to a leisure centre in terms of its marketing generally	Structure	MX	C
um, what I would do, I have just been to a fitness 2000 seminar and they are very much commercially minded and y are saying you what you need are sales staff in your centres selling memberships you know dedicated people and he moment we don't do that, so that would be something I think that if we had the capability or the funds to have licated sales people and possibly link that with marketing as well, because not every centre has a dedicated rking person, and often it is a duty officer who has a few hours per week and often that gets shunted more ortant comes and things, you know slip and then when things start to slide, they say we didn't do any marketing but y didn't have, it is just a vicious circle so that would be one of, to look at staffing definitely	Structure	MX	C
have a marketing budget for a start off and probably employ somebody that knows marketing	Structure	MX	D
hindered it because of the other things I said before, but I think if things go the way they look to be going they	Structure	MX	D

ould help it because I think the marketing issues in terms of who are our customers what do they want is all part of e best value process, and dress it up in any term you like they make not regard it as marketing, but it's going to the ame sort of issues of what a proper marketing policy would have			
would like to develop the hardware side of it and this department, this is the marketing department but I would like ore help and I would like more hardware and software and say, that's a personal thing, that's a selfish thing because I ould like to be doing it	Tangibles	MX	A
le is now in his own right or in her own right a marketing tool, they will help to sell the centre from top to bottom, ow talking specifically about Herons it's knowing that we are offering the right, getting the product right, getting the rice right, the staff training, the quality of customer care that are staff are able to bring to it, and that's not easy and aybe we will talk about that more later perhaps	Tangibles	MX	A
t is an overall picture as well, I'm not trained enough, qualified enough in terms of marketing to talk about the five p's r the six or seven or twenty four p's or whatever you want to call them but it is getting the whole mix right, from the ment people and it's even physical, it is things like the building	Tangibles	MX	A
We have a particularly pretty, nice looking building	Tangibles	MX	A
That particular centre, the design is pleasing to the eye, but actually does give us operational problems, but can ctually affects the marketing	Tangibles	MX	A
A lot of the time I'm thinking about receptionists because their job is largely customer orientated, they are the first ort of call, they are the first contact they are the first impression and you never get another chance to make a first pression as Ted Blake said, and they have fundamental personality problems that perhaps which they are not even ware of, and it's, probably one of the most difficult aspects of the job to try and get that across without completely ining some bodies confidence or motivation	Tangibles	MX	A
rom the point of view of us, we've got three main areas that we obviously need to indicate, I mean the swimming ools, we've got the only swimming pools in Chelmsford, so that's quite a local area thing	Tangibles	MX	B
think I said on the first question how I sort of perceived marketing an although I don't want it to be seen that I'm from eand Office and this is what it is I want them all to have ownership on everyone in the centre is involved in marketing, they are frontline staff and they are dealing with customers then they are dealing with marketing, because it is all to with appearance, how you react, or interact with customers so it is not just one specific person they have got their marketing hat on	Tangibles	MX	C
o it's like a, goes and round and round in a circle so we end up doing posters which is our best effort of providing mething	Tangibles	MX	D
To make marketing more effective? Well I would change, I would put some money into the facilities (Q What sort of lue would you put on that?) Well we are looking at, I mean at the moment we have standard pools with associated y facilities that have sports fitness and so on, and we are looking at a number of possibilities of creating leisure entre which is what we really want. I would spend more money on the actual building When, if you see our buildings on will know what we mean We promised, the staff have been promised, but have, from time to time we have this ing called the wish list, and you know what would you like, and it raised everybody's hopes and nothing seems to ange apart from minor stuff, and it just gives staff the feeling that basically nobody cares	Tangibles	MX	D
ry little, apart from our own fliers or posters that we do which virtually are up in our own swimming pools and ntres there is perhaps one advert a year for something particular, perhaps a summer holiday programme and that is sentially because there isn't any set budget for marketing	Tangibles	MX	D
o really it's very very poor, its what we can produce our self and that only really appeals to the people that come tually into our centres, because it doesn't go externally	Tangibles	MX	D
's a need to look at the bigger picture that a clean changing room floor is as important as any advertisement and early they have a role to play on that front	Tangibles	MXSQ	C
those customers are coming back they must be getting, to me, a good level of service quality and ranges from staff ing neat, tidy, polite, the centre being clean and tidy, good posters obviously within the centres, good leaflets they n take away with them so they know when classes are taking place and that sort of thing, and good response when ey have complaints and comments to make about the centre that they see things happening when they make those rt of comments	Tangibles	MXSQ	D
o it affects, I mean marketing, a lot of people think it is just like putting the ad in a paper, but it is all down to, a lot other things including the way in which receptionists treat the staff, the customers, how the facility looks as you tk into it	Tangibles	MXSQ	D
gain I keep coming back to this indicator of throughput, I do make this very raw correlation between sustained crease throughput and customer satisfaction	Customer Satisfaction	MXSX	C
he role of marketing is to ascertain customer needs, to improve services, therefore to gain, by using marketing as a ol for this purpose you can therefore improve the services and have more come and more using the facilities and ve people enjoy using the facilities more	Definition	MXSX	A
very customer that walks through our doors is earn't, so we have to be customer orientated, but that having been said ry often and it happens in my own organisation hopefully less than other places we make up our minds what we nt to do we then go and consult with the public to hope that they will endorse what we have decided and then we ll implement what thought in the first place so there are issues surrounding that I mean warts and all in terms of that t very often you do do consultation but it is more about please verify what we want as opposed to what do you really nt and therefore we will change our service or service delivery or a programme to suite exactly your needs	Definition	MXSX	C
mean you and I because we are in the business, know the benefits and the enjoyment and the pleasure and the health d all the rest of it of having a regular swim or a game of badminton or squash or whatever it may be, really is about ling people or getting them to understand that there is, you know, it is an, I play squash, and I play squash not so ch to keep fit but I enjoy a pint, and I also think that I have earn't a pint after I have had a game of squash	Definition	MXSX	C
'like a natter with me mate, and it is not just the 40 or 45 minutes I'm playing squash, it's about having another outlet, about getting away from the missus for an hour and a half type of thing, and it is really getting that message across people, so probably the apathy and the education issue is probably as bigger competitor to what we do as any terial things	Definition	MXSX	C
terms of the softer issues of marketing, the customer care, the quality of service, the facilities are proactive in that terms of training of looking for, not awards in terms of badges on walls but awards in order to improve service, I ntioned that they had got ISO 9000 and we are working at one of the centres to get QUEST the Leisure agement quality award by the sort of autumn of this year	Definition	MXSX	C
velopment in, I mean if you are looking at it in its broadest sense, both in terms of facilities and in terms of staff and ervice and marketing, one of the things you must never do is get complacent, I think that this sort of complacency, well we working at 95% capacity we can't do any more	Definition	MXSX	C
o I would say where we identify a problem we would look at it and put that in our plan to actually attack, or estigate attack and try and solve the problem in the long term	Responsiveness	MXSX	B
ll it would be very glib of me to say, come out with our sort of stated aims which is I think to give a quality service erceived good value, but in a nut shell effectively that's what it is	Definition	SQ	A



mean we are a service led industry so that's what we are attempting to do for the people of the district anyway	Definition	SQ	A
It's the quality of instructor, it's the quality of equipment we will be using, the quality of the actual environment they're going to be working out in, it's taking the whole sort of picture really into account	Definition	SQ	B
How would I interpret (rpt Q) Well the bottom line is how, perhaps how many, how full classes are and how full the centre is but obviously it's a wider a picture, we are obviously very conscious of the fact of that it's the staff have really got to lead the way	Empathy	SQ	A
Now again, in my time in the industry gone are the days are the rec asst or the lifeguard standing on the poolside was rarely and simply a lifeguard	Empathy	SQ	A
We don't go, interesting point actually, because I have done a bit work with Quest and I went to the centre, and one of the things I said to them, not to catch them out at all, how many lockers not working is acceptable? 10, 10%, 50? What your benchmark on that one, and they haven't got one, so my staff don't know that 3 lockers not working is acceptable but 5 isn't	Measurement	SQ	C
We would benchmark our service quality against that of competitors, but that's in its sort of infancy stage at the moment so I wouldn't like to say that we are doing that to the best of our ability but we are certainly making an effort to form allegiances to other local authorities and other providers for them to come in and you know you have a mystery shopper visit and feed back to us and obviously we'd take on board that information	Measurement	SQ	C
Now we have quite rigid ways in which we present monthly reports and we will compare attendances with attendances and attrition rates at various sites and we will try and sort of come up with figure that we feel is a, replicates good customer service	Measurement	SQ	C
I think in the past, we've often relied upon, where we felt service quality could be improved, I think they've relied on refresher training, where it's required particularly at sharp end areas like reception with customers, catering, all that sort of thing	Motivation	SQ	B
We would like to improve the quality of my staff, that's not being critical of them, but in terms of training and input, but from practical points of view, very difficult	Motivation	SQ	C
Now again what we are looking at is a customer care programme, and although we have things in place we want to formalise it. I mean the centres go on customer services training, making sure they know how to handle complaints, listening to the customer that sort of thing. So from every level of the organisation, the staff are aware of dealing with customers and making sure that they have a good time	Motivation	SQ	C
Well, the quality assurance has been recent, three or four years in operation so before that you know we didn't have procedures and systems to follow, so that's definitely helped things, what else, probably lots of ways I just can't think of anything else	Motivation	SQ	C
The KRA appraisal meetings are useful in effecting behavioural change because line managers have an opportunity to sit down with staff on an interrupted formal basis, (sorry KRA) Key result areas, basically appraisal meetings. To discuss their role, so if there are problems with it that might be affecting their behaviour at work we can identify those and maybe effect change that will ultimately enhance service delivery	Motivation	SQ	C
However operationally it's a bit of a nightmare because again it's built in the round and we have to be quite on our feet then the architects were showing us original plans to point out the fact that if you start sticking all those palm trees in we are going to need probably an extra lifeguard a year, a life guard on duty to be able to monitor that are cause the lifeguard standing here won't be able to see beyond those palm trees	Reliability	SQ	A
With some of the staff and the younger staff in particular it is a case of training You are looking at attitudes and personalities a lot of the time and it is just trying to bring them on in terms of next time, it isn't always black and white	Reliability	SQ	A
For individual staff, that is a difficult one, because we undoubtedly have people, some of those people we will have brought in ourselves, some people we have grown up with, they have been imposed upon us if you like, but sometimes not easy, your are talking about fundamental issues, sometimes you do get a feel that they are in the wrong job	Reliability	SQ	A
Both really as with the previous question on marketing, it's not in our interest to cut corners and lower standards there is a pressure there to make a return, our aim is to provide quality facilities and services and perceive good value it is a summary of our aim, so yes we do aspire to that but inevitably the system does hinder because of the financial pressures, it is a tight rope we have to get the balance just right	Reliability	SQ	A
When I started in leisure in 15 or so years ago or so, I worked in establishments that had recreation assistants duty managers, plant operators receptionists that had worked there many years, and were probably going to be working there until retirement	Reliability	SQ	A
Nowadays, we still have a few left of that ilk, but if you look around our leisure centres, and a probably a number of others, there is an awful lot of kids who have recently left school	Reliability	SQ	A
We are quality assured, ISO 9002 which obviously shows a quality system as to how we operate	Reliability	SQ	A
All of the different things that come through and that are to actually train the staff properly so that when we get there we are confronted with the people we serve, with the service people that we are doing it right	Reliability	SQ	A
Now again another one that we are looking at is competency frameworks	Reliability	SQ	A
I think the entry for marketing and advertising suffered as a result, and we have for many years had to depend on large numbers of casually employed staff and therefore putting those two things together and going back to the image thing, and public perception / customer perceptions, if you have, what with the best will in the world you have to say our low ability staff with limited commitment who are here today gone tomorrow, then obviously the level of service that you are able to deliver through those staff is likely to suffer It's not a complaint it's just a fact of life and the council was very keen to retain in house so the bid was constructed on that basis	Reliability	SQ	B
Now, they haven't been, depends what's meant by service quality really doesn't it, it's again they have been adequate to produce the quality that we felt has been necessary to achieve our business objectives, but we would have spent more for a different regime, and we will be looking to spend more now, we are in surplus to produce better quality	Resources	SQ	A
Now pausing because I don't have the authority now, we now need to spend more money, we need to perhaps employ other full time promotions assistant, we would like to invest in more projects which will improve the range of facilities and activities that we provide at present but will also overcome that design problem we were talking about at Kingsmead but there are 4 other centres, but Kingsmead does represent 50% of our total turnover so I would like to find more money and will be on some new projects, I think the authority is there, we are now looking at spending money for instance on the external appearance of Kingsmead, again, it is not necessarily an area that I think has put customers off, but with the potential competition coming up in a year or two's time where we are, we have always tried to position the service facilities so that they are received as the equivalent of private club quality facilities but at local authority rates, again our aim is quality facilities and services at perceived good value and I think we have achieved it but again it is a difficult one to measure	Resources	SQ	A
We will be doing that over the next year and two years we would increase the number of front line operational staff, we have got by on very strict regimes to date where every 15 minutes everybody's day is allocated to a task, so we know that we are operating with bare minimum number of staff and that's about it at every site, and again that is a little off with service quality, it doesn't give us the flexibility to answer the phone, full stop Not even within 3 rings or rings and the ansaphone hasn't worked and other techniques that we have looked at	Resources	SQ	A
Now, I would say yes, the only problem would be that most of the budgets are planned a year in advance and you don't	Resources	SQ	B



ways necessarily know something that you need to improve that far in advance that could cost quite a lot of money to improve as quality of service			
think the system again, because of the life of the contract, and the changing needs of leisure within the 6 year period, the expectations of the customer can change quite dramatically and the quality of the service is specified at the start of the contract period, so unless the council or "the system" if you want to call it that way can pump in more money, then it's really down to the centre management to work whether they have got the resources to improve the quality or they haven't. They have got to make a judgement in terms of their market share, whether they need to improve the quality to be in more of the market and that's probably happened in some areas over the last few years.	Resources	SQ	B
would say overall probably not, I think if more resources were available, the quality of the service could improve, but cost certainly would improve.	Resources	SQ	B
but I believe that although we are employed in local government, given the freedom we are as good as any good as any private contractor as far as I am concerned but what we do need to concentrate on is cleaning, customer care, customer service and I think that that will, that actually, we will invest heavily in that area so we do get it right	Resources	SQ	B
I think that again there is a great deal of freedom for individual units within the authority to develop its own approach towards customer orientation and improvement of service delivery and again within a finite budget, I mean that we have to be conscious of cost and resource implications there is a recognition that there is, particularly in areas where it is a discretionary service like leisure, sport, there is a need to be innovative and to ensure the best possible service, and I think the introduction of best value I think will now orientate other non end service units or departments more towards a customer orientation to this sort of internal customer approach	Resources	SQ	C
Deep sigh) I think my answer to that is probably no, and I am trying to think of what constitutes service quality and therefore what constitutes budgets, I think that one thing in terms of quality it is not about more staff or more resources, it is about making best use of what you have already got	Resources	SQ	C
's through staff meetings, through, even though I slip between here and Herons, I hear and react to any issue that is brought to my attention which is a sort service nature whether, and a lot of it will be a more serious customer complaint or anything or customer comment forms which come through	Responsiveness	SQ	A
'it's individuals involved I'll then be replying back to individuals, either give them a pat on the back how they acted on the complaint, or the compliment or the suggestion and with wider issues larger issues that's reported back, I have a weekly duty managers meeting which is pretty regular, don't miss too many of those and it is reported back there to duty managers, a lot of those issues potentially involve the duty managers anyway, they are the person who has obviously picked it up	Responsiveness	SQ	A
that often seems to be the problem with particularly young staff it's that they, not always, but they will always see things as black and white, that's the rule you can't do that They won't see the shades of grey and also that fact that we need to blow in the wind with customers and listen to them to make sure that, hang on a minute that's the third person who has mentioned about that particular problem we should be taking note of that, we should be changing our programme we should offering that facility, we should be doing that piece of maintenance of whatever it might be	Responsiveness	SQ	A
we should be capable of letting certain aspects go at certain times when it's good to do that, and people will I think still react to that	Responsiveness	SQ	A
but where it's difficult is where you have somebody that is not capable perhaps of or, again I am thinking of these two three people in particular, they will allow themselves to just, the happy smiley face the nice welcome goes out of the window and it comes across as very terse, we notice it occasionally in telephone conversations, you phone a centre and the response on the end of the phone is very poor and you have to remind people of oh! What has happened to their croons swimming pool, and a nice cheery voice and if at all, not Herons, and other aspects as well, just the way people talk to people and the words that they use, very very difficult and again it's not something we've had, you get a real deal of time to with somebody and try and, through role play or whatever and try and sort out Sometimes you just have to go with it	Responsiveness	SQ	A
have had to obviously speak over the years and I have had to drag people in and say do you realise you are doing this or we've had this complaint	Responsiveness	SQ	A
you know, whatever problems you have got at home or in your private life you have to leave them behind and it's an effort. It doesn't matter how you feel you have got to try and put it on all the time	Responsiveness	SQ	A
worry question again? (rpt ) No, not ideally no, it's this toss up between budgets and giving that perceived good value at the end of the day, the service provision that you'd really like to, now, yea, in an ideal world, I don't know every customer that came through the door would have their own sort of customer service person latch on to them straight away and take them through and here is you change sir or madam	Responsiveness	SQ	A
at the moment we are running short on staff	Responsiveness	SQ	A
now if we are stretched in a swimming situation you've obviously got, the main concern is the health and welfare of people in that swimming pool, and so if you are stretched for staff and all your resources are being put into that, you are then stretched as far as not enough people potentially on reception, not enough people floating around, which is a worry at any time, but in an ideal world we would have more coverage there and obviously we are looking at things like customer service desks and again the centre like Kingsmead can probably justify it, it is a big centre, obviously it has wet dry facilities, fitness, dance studio	Responsiveness	SQ	A
and, not as we would probably like to, again it's an area where are now very, we are looking at these business plans and we are looking at customer service desks and we are aware that we could be doing better in that respect and what's really brought it to the fore is new management information system because that has put a hell of a lot of pressure on reception counters and I think that's the way the industry is going as well, it is very glib to sort of say well you know a sort of American example and all the time things are being thrown at us from America and of course people expecting higher and higher quality of service and they want to queue less and, but I think gradually bit by bit that's the way it is going and so we've got to, I say react to that	Responsiveness	SQ	A
probably like to, wouldn't say improve the training, but would be really a means of getting back to providing the training we were carrying out when times were better financially when there wasn't so much pressure financially which freed me up really, I was going around doing internal customer care courses with staff and small groups of staff and that's lapsed again because of survival Because I think that is important and even though most staff you see believe that they don't need it and yet you witness it day and day out, that there are small aspects which you would like latch onto	Responsiveness	SQ	A
now you can tell them that, you know staff training session till you are blue in the face sometimes and it would be to be doing that on a regular basis, and the reason we do it in house because we have seen some of the training videos and a lot of them are sort of blanket general things which are thrown at any service industry and a lot of them would be hotels and catering, and it's not specific enough and the kind of anecdotes which us as managers, and we've got three or four managers now that have been in the business for a long time and specifically in this area as well, and a lot of anecdotal information and we use that and we are using specific examples, we using specific people potentially like "I saw you do this the other day" then you are telling me that you are a, you know you've been doing the receptionist for twenty years and you know the job inside out and I can't teach you anything, I saw you do that the other day So it would be the training aspect, and again potentially you are looking at resources, human resources its	Responsiveness	SQ	A

making sure that we have adequate staff on a lot of the time			
We have the quality assurance accreditation, and we have the aim, and as discussed earlier, those two sort of give us direction for continuous improvement	Responsiveness	SQ	A
We have staff development schemes through appraisal and training and development plans and there doesn't tend to be a fixed budget for staff training, again we guarantee that every member of staff can do a training course every year, as agreed at a staff appraisal	Responsiveness	SQ	A
When the specifications are drawn up, unless they incorporate some element of, a larger element of quality within that when they are just going to get the lowest bid possibly the lowest quality within that, and obviously whoever operates it, a centre is going to try and do it as efficiently and effectively as possible	Responsiveness	SQ	A
But if the bid is a lot lower than your rivals then it stands to reason that the funds are therefore are going to be a lot lower unless you can come up with ways of investing and improving to generate more income, but then as I said before the problem with that is if you are reaching the contractual obligations, the tendency is to keep up the sleeve of new ideas until it comes to re-tendering	Responsiveness	SQ	A
There has been since the introduction of tendering about 7 or 8 years ago there has been a gradual reduction in staffing levels all around which obviously means longer waiting times, less cleaning time, less supervision of activities so that would be addressed immediately whether it's a customer care complaint etc or it will be picked up and answered because you have to deal with the issue, marketing isn't quite the same, you don't have a person coming and saying oh, this is wrong, your marketing is, deal with it now	Responsiveness	SQ	A
So I would say that the service quality issues come up more regularly because of the way that they need to be addressed and they always are addressed very quickly	Responsiveness	SQ	A
still think that we have a long way to go, but there has been a change in people's thoughts and staff's attitudes since CCT came about	Responsiveness	SQ	A
Well, again it does go back a little bit on the last service quality issue, I would definitely look at the training up of our staff, and what we do and how we do it in a big big way	Responsiveness	SQ	A
Obviously any systems you set as standard at a level, if you set it low you can achieve it, it depends where you set that standard	Responsiveness	SQ	A
I think that sometimes we slightly get caught up with these are the latest ways of doing things, or this is the way that we have always done it rather than really carefully planning and thinking ahead We may still get caught up in that tightly, but I tend to think that we do it quite well	Responsiveness	SQ	A
That brought about a change of attitudes, not particularly customers, customers didn't know that much, they knew something was going on and they might have heard that the staff were transferring or a private company may be coming to operate, but it certainly affected the staff because obviously again when you work under, a very tight bid to operate services there maybe issues such as low pay, there may be morale, motivation of staff that are affected and it has happened, it's happened in this contract and the pre CCT operation of leisure centres and what it is now has changed drastically	Responsiveness	SQ	A
Looking at what a good manager supervisor needs to actually be a good manager in Canterbury, so that when we get that coal face and we do get to the front we are dealing with public, we all know the one that the person sat in not interested in the chair in the swimming pool or the receptionist has got a bad face etc	Responsiveness	SQ	A
mean in Riverside, when you see Kevin he will talk to you about it, we, trying to develop in sort of more detail and practice the continuous improvement the process of the business excellence model, and we trying to sort of absorb reality in that	Responsiveness	SQ	B
mean there will be times when I or other management staff at the centre, or client side staff would say look we are not actually satisfied with that aspect of the operation, so you know, something gets done about it. So it's done in a variety of ways I mean, (1) it's a part of a, the ongoing way in which the place is managed but also on the exception basis, we would step in and do something	Responsiveness	SQ	B
The system helps I think because with the ties to the council especially we are always kept up to date with what's new, with things like best value, so from the point of view of quality service there then that's obviously at the forefront of moving forward	Responsiveness	SQ	B
Basically ensuring that the offer is as good as you can always make it whatever your role, being at the sharp end or in the back room or whatever, is the highest quality and lives up to customer expectations	Responsiveness	SQ	B
I think since, it's got a big role to play partly in terms of the council's overall image, it's the council's biggest single facility so people judge the council on this facility, very much so Sorry can you please repeat the question, I lost my train of thought there? (Q rpt) In addition to what I have just said, obviously at the centre level, marketing is very much about satisfying the customers in Chelmsford again, they are the council tax payers, they are contributing to the cost of this centre	Responsiveness	SQ	B
We have a focus, and that focus statement has recently been redefined on the basis, mainly feedback from staff. That isn't displayed to customers but that will obviously reference customer needs the need offer a quite diverse programme a safe and clean environment, keeping abreast of industry trends and investing in staff. So you could say that is quite customer focused. As I say, this isn't advertised to customers	Responsiveness	SQ	C
I like to think that they are involved in the development of the marketing strategy and the individual marketing activities in terms of the hardware, I'm not so sure that's true, and that will be either be confirmed or otherwise by the staff	Responsiveness	SQ	C
So we are always very aware of opportunities to improve levels of service	Responsiveness	SQ	C
What they are not prepared to put up with is surly service and I think that staff are perhaps the important key within a sort of marketing chain	Responsiveness	SQ	C
OK I will give you an example, I won't say which one, there was a particular member of staff, I think Eric will agree with me, was counter productive in the sense that didn't, thought that didn't know what we were doing, and it is very difficult in local government to deal with that and you have to try and manage it, well that person has left and the change has been dramatic And I think it is all to do with the culture and how people felt about it, and provided you've got enough people who are enthusiastic I think it rubs off on the others. If you have got a few people are negative, it is very difficult to change that culture with the others	Responsiveness	SQ	D
So, I would say they want us to do everything, and with no money. The way I see it, is that the strategy basically says we will do, will provide all these sections of the community special initiatives for those sections, fulfil all of the corporate policies with equal opportunities, sexual discrimination, all the rest of it, with no money. And it's all just words until money is given to enable us to do it and it always seems that we are begging for money but that is actually the case, but until that's done, you can only do it in a very limited way For arguments sake, there is a requirement there for specific groups that are under represented in terms that sports council recognise, say for ethnic minorities	Responsiveness	SQ	D
So do that, in our current facilities we have to lose income to it, or we have to change the structure of the building in certain ways in order to do it. It all costs money, now when we are up against strict expenditure and income targets, though we want to do it, because at the end of the day, when it comes to the budget and the out turn of the budget are you down? Eric knows what it is like, you can't say it's because we put on this special course and "you wouldn't have done it?", that's the problem So it all sounds very good, and I am not saying I disagree with it, but in	Responsiveness	SQ	D

ality, in putting into place, you can only do it with money			
's really a case where managers see that perhaps an area isn't up to standard i.e. changing rooms aren't being cleaned	Responsiveness	SQ	D
Tectively, customers are complaining that they then look into the reasons why there is a fall down in a particular area			
then to react by either retraining the staff or sitting down and talking to the staff on an individual basis if it's one			
rticular member of staff who is not prepared to clean toilets, things like that			
but within those, staff training times, some of it is spent obviously some of it doing swimming life saving training,	Responsiveness	SQ	D
it other stuff is spent on what happens in the event of fire, bomb alerts this sort of thing so the staff are aware of			
cactly how to treat the customers should those events happen			
gain a big influx of money to just routine stuff to just provide a better quality of service to the customers, i.e. proper	Responsiveness	SQ	D
owers that work and proper toilets that flush, the basic essentials			
ublic won't even necessarily notice it but it is things that, we've had things go wrong We've had problems with	Tangibles	SQ	A
ertain mechanical parts of the centre, even that is part of the marketing process and we were very badly hit by			
owers that didn't work over a period of two years and that affected business very badly and we've had to claw that			
usiness back and slowly but surely but that's another issue, we tried to stay out of the press as best we could with			
auses and things because our own staff were fighting very hard to manage something that we had no control			
We are going to have to look at it more closely at some of the other centres where if just perhaps won't be feasible or	Tangibles	SQ	A
acticable			
o to actually to try and improve upon that, and it's not easy, with others it's more a question just how they go about	Tangibles	SQ	A
ckling a situation and improving that and I think the previous question you are able to do that, bring people in and			
y that it isn't always black and white and shades of grey			
lost of them I think are sort of aware of it and it's just getting that sort of almost like "Disney" attitude that you can	Tangibles	SQ	A
: a real sour puss in the staff room but once you walk through that door you are on a stage			
ve try not to be classic local authority provision and in certain areas we do achieve that quite well people are always	Tangibles	SQ	A
ite astonished at the nature of our fitness facilities			
but we feel now that we are starting again to lag behind and we need to catch up	Tangibles	SQ	A
mple things, like customers come in to the desk and you see the receptionist carrying on a conversation with	Tangibles	SQ	A
mebody else			
ve could provide a much better quality service if we employed more people as simple example, either more	Tangibles	SQ	A
anagers and more front line staff, we would prefer to have more receptionists working out on the front, we would			
re a customer services desk, but the pressure in the first couple of years is such that we cannot entertain that, it is			
ithin the strategy further along the line, and it certainly hinders in that respect and I think in the old way of doing			
ings we would have been able to justify higher budgets and we would have been providing a better quality service,			
e try to provide a service that is acceptable, it won't drive people away, with that we have to watch what else is being			
rovided in the district			
ve, my role is to work with each manager, and is for me to evaluate the level of customer service quality at each	Tangibles	SQ	A
ntre, whether it is access to the centre as you struggled with today, or car parking, receptions, queuing internal			
gnage, notice boards, quality of changing facilities			
ut, we have got drains, sorry, floors that don't fall to drain, which is very typical, but the design brief, you know we	Tangibles	SQ	A
id to the architect, we are not teaching you to suck eggs but this is a perennial problem, and it still does not fall to			
ain, so you get a lot water forming and its difficult to keep squeezing it away, and as soon as it is done it starts			
ming again We now employ staff in there round the clock, but perhaps we really should perhaps have 2 people in			
ere round the clock, one squeezing water one cleaning Absolutely ridiculous, but we try to involve the staff into			
haps longer term solutions in can we redesign the area, can we change the traffic flows, and try and keep outdoor			
oes from wet areas			
. customer will be quite satisfied I am sure providing the buildings are clean and the water is the right temperature,	Tangibles	SQ	A
d is healthy, and the showers work and providing they get a smile when they get to reception and no one is rude to			
em, I mean that is what we would describe as acceptable standards, but we want to go beyond that and we need to try			
involve the staff, motivate the staff to want to go beyond that, otherwise they might as well tread water themselves,			
we are beginning to re evaluating all that, but that is nothing new, that is something we have tried to do over the			
re years and we have had some success, but is a very difficult one to maintain			
y their being able to participate in the activity with good facilities, clean, good condition, clean up to date so that	Tangibles	SQ	A
en they leave the centre they can basically forget about their surroundings and just enjoy the activity			
ervice quality depends on many things, human resources, general ambience of the centre by decor, quality of	Tangibles	SQ	A
quipment, modernising and updating equipment, that can't be done unless you have the funding to do so			
re main areas that I would probably change would be on human resources, freeing up the marketing manager to carry	Tangibles	SQ	A
t that role as one position rather than having to carry out three roles I think he is currently having to, trying to do and			
so his assistant marketing person whose time is gradually being diminished as resources elsewhere as priorities			
ewhere means that priorities have to be made and deal with the task ahead			
ervice quality would again mainly come down to human resources	Tangibles	SQ	A
ut, next week, all the swimming pool changing rooms are being ripped out, week after that, the in house computer	Tangibles	SQ	B
stem is being changed			
he week after that I think they are starting on the re roofing of the whole of Riverside and so on and so on and so on	Tangibles	SQ	B
think that the service quality is dictated by the facilities with a lot of money in that already, but I also think it is an	Tangibles	SQ	B
erational think, it's an operational thing whereby obviously the staff, it's something that perhaps, improve training, I			
entioned sort of customer care before, but I think there is an overall, quality issues I think are staff at the top of the			
ganisation, management, are aware of them and I think that doesn't necessarily filter all the way down, I think some			
ney and effort in terms of training, staff right the way down the organisation would be a useful investment.			
this environment there has to be a product that is capable of being sold, and I would start of by saying that the	Tangibles	SQ	B
ilding has to be in good condition, and offer the right range of facilities			
ink what I would do is to try and concentrate on one single thing, the image of the building, the quality of the	Tangibles	SQ	B
ishes, basically upgrade the building so that customers feel that they are getting a sort of quality environment			
aving said that what I have sought to do since I took over 12 months ago, is to look at quality, and we are looking at	Tangibles	SQ	B
: whole issue of cleaning because that came out very heavily in our market research and quite rightly so			
don't think that it's perfect by any means, I mentioned earlier the cleaning, certainly we are looking at that	Tangibles	SQ	B
e certainly do look at areas where we want to improve, we know that the glass in reception as a prime example is	Tangibles	SQ	B
nothing that doesn't help us with customer relations and service to customer			
e are, we have invested or investing in a customer services supervisor who will look at things like direct debit tours	Tangibles	SQ	B
und the centre, information to customers so we are looking at that			
ink at the moment they're not but I think that we are starting to invest, inwardly invest in the building in the	Tangibles	SQ	B
ilities that we offer, in the number of staff that we will offer, staff facilities i.e. canteens and that sort of thing and I			
very keen to make sure that our staff are a happy staff so that they will give of their best			

capital schemes are normally financed by the authority, but having said that as a DSO anything that we would like to	Tangibles	SQ	B
first of all we have to get permission, but secondly if we can finance it ourselves then we will do			
prime example of that I am looking at the end of March next year to open up reception as an improvement in service	Tangibles	SQ	B
quality and customer care so if we take out the glass that we have presently got in reception because it's not very, not			
very customer friendly and I am looking for us as a DSO to finance that because I can see the benefits of that and it			
gives me the opportunity then to perhaps spend some surplus money that I have got at the end of the year			
Whilst it overlooks a river, and today it looks very nice, the fact is in February, going down, you can't actually find	Tangibles	SQ	B
it way in if you are a first time customer			
there are a lot of physical difficulties that we have to deal with in terms of image and most of the commuters in	Tangibles	SQ	B
Helmsford go to Liverpool St on the train and they see the very worst of it, so there is that sort of public perception			
and then the other important thing to understand, what I touched on earlier, it is an operation whose finance is largely			
terminated by the basis of the CCT bid which is totally financially driven, which in a local authority context is very			
difficult, because there is a whole range of organisational overheads which get loaded into bid and there are a whole			
range of expenditure line items which private sector bid would never have			
So things, there would be substantial capital improvements of certain bits of the building, and I think also the ability	Tangibles	SQ	B
to invest more in staff training of the sorts I've just described			
There are things that I think that I would like to do more or quicker, small example, I think that if a shower breaks	Tangibles	SQ	C
down it should be repaired within 12 hours, if there is a chip of a bit of concrete in the spectator area within 3 days it			
could be done			
If a wall gets marked with shoes then within a week it should be painted, so I think that those are issues where if you	Tangibles	SQ	C
had more resources and if they managed effectively then service quality could improve, unfortunately, not only in the			
public sector but in the private sector, I have to see that there is a financial return to that because, we, I mentioned			
earlier, have finite budgets, so if I could prove in inverted commas, that I have this guy walking around with a paint tin			
you know a plumber mending the shower, that more people would come in because they were satisfied with my			
service, or they would come more regularly or they would tell their friends and they would bring 10 more people in, if			
you could sort of correlate that then I think that we could do more about it, but it is sort of trying to work within the			
resources we have got and although as I say we have a certain amount leeway in terms of flexibility in terms of the			
budgets if we spend an extra £10k and we make an extra £20k then that is OK, I spend an extra £10k and I don't make			
then I have got some problems. So, we could do more, but it is difficult within the sort of financial restraints that are on			
the operation			
Of course, if we invest £6m in the Purzfield Centre and it is an infinitely better quality facility, then it is quite likely	Tangibles	SQ	C
that we will get more people than at say, Barnet Copal because the hardware is there			
to some extent it is all about image but as I say I think that is very much a veneer, you have to be able to sustain that	Tangibles	SQ	C
image in terms of the product, the quality of the provision of facility and indeed the levels of service that you receive,			
and integral to that there is no doubt about that is our staff and I think that people perhaps are prepared to put up with			
old facilities and they are prepared to put up with ones that aren't as good as the one "down the way"			
And again probably that managers will say not, in terms of cleaning and obviously the majority of comments we get	Tangibles	SQ	C
on cleaning, making things, this is out of order or whatever, and sometimes we don't have the capability or the like			
an equipment is out of date or needs updating, don't always get funds to do that so, each year it seems that budgets are			
tighter and tighter so I'd probably say no to that as well			
It's sort of an operational thing, again it's making sure that we have got enough staff to supervise the gym or the time,	Tangibles	SQ	C
because some centres, OK they are fairly small but it is giving the customer that extra service that you know we have			
got a qualified staff always on hand to ask any questions, again cleaners I think, I mean the centre managers would			
probably tell you differently but I think they need more hours for cleaning so more staff or extend what they have			
readily got			
So now to enhance service quality, if I was looking at one element of that which would be cleanliness for example, to	Tangibles	SQ	C
improve and add in resources retrospectively are going to be quite difficult			
So would say, you know I am quite aware at the moment of the areas that need addressing that need enhancing the	Tangibles	SQ	C
quality of service, and I would say cleanliness is a big issue, and this is made more difficult by the fact that we are			
erecting a temporary building on the one hand, which is the changing areas and the reception areas, and this			
permanent structure			
Is that carpet dirty or is it clean?" to you or to me	Tangibles	SQ	C
But certainly things were they could be measured like lockers is a prime example, we need to do a little bit more on	Tangibles	SQ	C
it, and certainly when we go down the queue line that will be brought more to the fore			
You can only do so much with that product and you don't know whether or not you are getting best value or not, but	Tangibles	SQ	D
when you compare it with other competitors that have a much better level of equipment and environment it is			
motivating for staff			
It doesn't mean to say it's good quality, that's a subjective thing, that in all honesty if we were running an aerobics	Tangibles	SQ	D
session say at one of our sports session and they were running at one of the brand new fitness centres you'd say that			
ours was better because of the better environment Depends what people regard as quality, whether it is the coach,			
or whether it is the locality			
So invest a significant amount of money to improve both the image to the customer and the working environment of	Tangibles	SQ	D
the staff I think would improve the quality no end			
So, we haven't got enough staff, the facilities are falling down, so the answer's no	Tangibles	SQ	D
Now if you can't have a new facility it means re-developing a site with an add on or whatever, that's my own view I	Tangibles	SQ	D
think you know there is only limited potential left in the sites that we have got Alright we could get some more			
space, but we would never meet, we'd never match the marketing budget in order to achieve it I mean we would have			
no satisfaction of having of having the older ones full up, but I don't we are going to really deal with it, we need to get			
new market, need to, new customers that we are not getting at the moment I think the only way to do that is to have a			
sure centre where you can then offer more to families, it is all to do, it is all to do with producing a product which is			
new, this is it" I have got staff working in facilities that are embarrassed with things that they have to offer It is very			
difficult to get enthusiastic about marketing when you are dealing with mould on walls and stuff like that			
So I would say that the services have suffered as a result, I mean the physical product has suffered in terms of the	Tangibles	SQ	D
buildings, hopefully the services that we have offered within that have tried to do their best they can in the services,			
but we are dealing with halls where there's continual leaks in the roofs and you can't provide a service because it is just			
impossible to use them and we are dealing with that sort of issue there			
Well, it's not necessarily top quality what it is, I think something that matches up to two things I suppose, firstly what	Customer	SX	B
we have said what we are going to do, and then what the customer expectation is	expectation		
Now sometimes customer's expectations is significantly more than what we said we were going to do, and that's	Customer	SX	B
ways difficult. But then also obviously to be effective you have got to satisfy customer's demands in terms of what	expectation		
particular activities they would like to see			
the department, or the leisure section? (leisure) Obviously being in the service industry and the leisure centres being	Definition	SX	A

the most important, one of our main service providers within the council, that is probably the most important issue whether it's customer care issue, whether its on customer focus groups etc They are the ones, it's the public we serve, it's of vital importance			
Well as far as we are concerned it is a continual process, I mean we are talking about Riverside, it's an income driven operation which works under a CCT contract won in competition with private sector companies, twice and there is a small management fee paid by the council to operate the centre, paid to the direct service organisation. But it's a big centre with a substantial turnover with a customer throughput in full year with about three quarters of a million people. It relies on the money that comes through the till, and the people who come through the door pay that money, and they come through the door if the services that we provide are the ones that they'll pay for. So it's crucial that we instantly develop services to meet expectations to deal with competition sort of thing that you had in your questionnaire, to try to ensure that we keep our facilities up to date as far as we are able to and all of that as I see is part of the marketing process isn't just producing nice leaflets and posters. It's actually looking at the complete package the offer that we have	Definition	SX	B
service that's accessible, that's safe, within sort of health and safety regulations	Definition	SX	B
service that's affordable for the public that at the same time we can afford to provide at that price	Definition	SX	B
would, a good service quality provision to me is where the customer's needs and requirements are fulfilled in that they continue to return to the centre for repeat visits time after time after time	Definition	SX	D
We are trying to create a wow factor or exceed expectations that has to be a continuous process, what's one day exceeds as a copy is down the road is seen as more of the norm Particularly as the quality of other leisure facilities or results increases and service standards increase elsewhere	Expectation	SX	A
the role of marketing is very much their business. If we are providing a service, whereby we are trying to exceed customer's expectations and do it profitably, I would hope that marketing is the driving force at every centre with every manager and we are trying to inculcate that with all the staff, but that is not quite so easy, this comes out later as we aspire to be a marketing orientated set up	Expectation	SX	A
We are trying to provide that extra bit of service where a customer will go away and tell people about it, perhaps even come back to me and say, "really was impressed at the Pier Sports Centre the other day" or Kingsmead, everybody nowadays I think is trying to provide a good quality service, and it is that exceeding expectations angle that we would like to introduce to staff over the years, that they have to go beyond the norm	Expectation	SX	A
the customers generally comment how surprised they are at the facilities and that they don't generally appreciate that they are local authority facilities but again we are not having to compete with anybody locally that they can sort of judge us against, but people coming from other areas are generally pleased with these facilities than if they had to join a private club	Expectation	SX	A
here's that, and you can't dismiss that because obviously if people are coming in, and they are coming regularly and we can measure that fact that the same people are coming back and they are satisfied and that obviously got to be very valuable test. But on top of that we need to be able to measure the more qualitative aspects particularly up against our competitors. Some areas of the building where we have a monopoly position it is a lot easier to do, perhaps we give less concern for that area. In other areas we do need to monitor the sort of satisfaction levels in a more objective way.	Measurement	SX	B
Well, many of our customers are very happy with our service, they never tell us so but you know they are very happy that if an if we do get it wrong we certainly get the letters of complaint and have to respond to that. But we don't do enough in my view to you know, with the customers	Measurement	SX	B
So at the end of the day I don't have to justify anything to anybody, what I would like to see is that, because it is a source you need to use that resource in an effective and an appropriate way and certainly we are trying to hit the objectives that we have got in the centre, cleaning being one, you know it's come up a number of times so we are looking at that and I am quite happy to make additional resources available for that area, I just like to see a return on what we spend out because it can be a bottomless pit, and we've only got limited resources but I'm happy to spend more if I could see more return, no doubt about that	Measurement	SX	B
We will review what we are doing, we will introduce new changes and then review that to see if it's actually working the way that we will monitor that is staff and customer feedback, and management checks on things like cleaning etc	Measurement	SX	B
Good service quality, you get feedback from comments, customer comments, complaints, that's about the only gauge we have really and we look at figures annually and see what the % increase or decrease is	Measurement	SX	D
that we are always aware of is that the sessions are underused, so that you can take it that as being an indication that is not good quality, or not what people want But it is difficult to say that even though a session is fully booked is still good quality or above a certain level	Measurement	SX	D
Well I'm very big on quality, and what I have found since I have been here, and I have been here 8 years, 9 years now, is that what we don't do is praise ourselves enough, we always criticise, we don't appreciate how many people do actually enjoy the facilities and like the facilities and appreciate what we do because we always see the bad side. Well we try and be positive around the centre but we obviously hone in on the negative sides and try and do something about those	Motivation	SX	B
behaviours? I think we are changing, I think we previously we tried to run the building with a rod of iron very much a fear factor and to be honest some people need that, they do	Motivation	SX	B
mean I am very much service orientated, I do believe that we do have a product here, I do believe we do a good job, now that we don't thank our staff enough, and I know that we don't shout enough about ourselves, and as managers we don't, we are probably too critical of people, but we are changing and we are looking at involving all the staff in what we do and I think that is important, that's the way forward really	Motivation	SX	B
they have a greater job satisfaction, hopefully what they get back, or give back is a better job performance and that goes into account a better quality of service in whatever form that takes and we are sort of inching our way through it, I mean it still remains to be seen if that's going to pay off	Motivation	SX	B
I think it's like motivation through training and investing in people interviews and things like that we carry out, trying to get the individual more responsible for their job and the service they provide and obviously because you have interviews at a regular period and we have a lot of staff on NVQ's and they are monitored and they are given projects what they do and we get feedback from how they do that really.	Motivation	SX	D
like you said earlier, there have been instances where we have had a particular personnel problem at one site, and since then the staff have got some enthusiasm generated, about painting, they have painted it themselves and improved their own environment. And that alone actually raised the way they felt about it, and I am sure that the end product is that the public are getting a better service at the moment	Motivation	SX	D
and we've taken the view, council's taken the view that DSO's will continue to operate on that basis until such times as we reposition our services for best value, and I think that's sensible actually, because I'd like to think that all our services will move on to quasi CCT basis	Positioning	SX	B
the one thing we are looking at is the British Quality Foundation business excellence model which again I've brought as something that I saw and felt that was something the centre could use from a staff and a customer point of view	Structure	SX	B

seek continuous improvement and again that is something we are looking at and introducing so that the these issues			
service quality where we are not doing very well we can monitor and improve and put resource in if we need to			
's nice to have that flexibility and not having to go committee	Structure	SX	B
low, you know, that's the sort of day to day difficulties that you face at a busy place like that with a substantial	Structure	SX	B
roughput with staff running at minimal levels, huge health and safety obligations, and of course a statutory bottom			
re commitment			
Ve subscribe to any number of formal and informal quality assurance parameters, the first was for example registered	Structure	SX	C
is0 9002, it, hopefully by, the end of this year and hopefully by late summer we will have a formal commitment to			
P			
I had the authority on that the major issue on that would be the number of staff we do employ and the wages budget,	Training	SX	D
id if I could increase that purely to have a few extra staff so that we can bring all the groups of staff together for			
aining purposes, rather than having to have one day of training with one set of staff because of the rota then finding			
other time maybe a week later with another set of staff from the other shift makes it very difficult because no matter			
ow hard you try perhaps both groups do not receive exactly the same information, whereas if they are all sitting down			
gether at one time they received exactly the same information and instructions and then everybody within the			
ilding would know what is expected rather than one group saying well we thought he meant this, and another group			
ying well he actually said this or said that and sometimes that can cause conflict within the centre, so we could			
actually have all the main stream staff if you like being able to actually sit down and get some training together on the			
major issues that they perhaps feel they need training on and all at the one time would be good			
Don't think it really helps that much again because the centre is run on a contract, the fact that it is a sort of 4 to 6 year	CCT	X	B
le span doesn't help because the main decisions on objectives, financial, social etc are done at the start of the contract			
id therefore there is not the ability to make, there is the ability, but it simply doesn't happen within the period of the			
contract unless there is a huge reason to do so			
but when you are in the tendering game and the objective is to win the tender, you win the tender and then negotiate	CCT	X	B
her things into it afterwards and our primary objective was to win the contract			
Ve haven't done it for, we've kept it very, because we are DSO, you know our financial figures are quite confidential	Company confidentiality	X	B
us because what we wouldn't want to do is give those to a member of staff who can actually give them to somebody			
se. So we have kept it quite tight			
omething council's don't really understand when they work in a place like this, they all go home at 5 o'clock which is	Culture	X	B
hen it all starts			
fore often than not customers won't complain if they are unhappy they just won't come back	Customer reaction	X	A
'e, it's identifying and trying to satisfy customer requirements profitably, running a contract we have to try and	Definition	X	A
sure that we are making a surplus unfortunately from a number of years ago, it is a slightly different organisation			
mean the problem with these is that there are always all sorts of other variables which, you know we get a really	Environmental issues	X	B
ood summer, we've got three swimming pools and the marketing doesn't make the slightest bit of difference it's the			
in coming out that brings the people in			
certainly in terms of the operating contract which I helped draw up as long as 8 years ago, you could not require a	Environmental issues	X	B
ivate sector operator to do anything in the way of marketing. Legislation at that time made that one of the things you			
ouldn't say you will do, and since it was an open contracting basis that also applies to the DSO whether you like it or			
st			
think that there are other areas that we need to look at like staff appraisal as well but certainly, we have identified	Measurement	X	B
ertain problems in the centre which we are now addressing and as and when finance becomes available we will invest			
those things to help us with our customers, getting our customers through the door			
but it is difficult, it is difficult, I mean I think probably we are very much driven by the bottom line and if we can feel	Measurement	X	D
at there is a degree of measurable benefit, then you tend to get a gut feel rather than actually have			
but which also hopefully give them the chance to feel that they can influence what happens a bit, and actually create	Motivation	X	D
e time for them to develop a bit of an understanding, or more of an understanding to feel that they are more sort of,			
empowered, I hate that word but, to influence the way in which the bit of the building operates and develops			
think now we are changing more towards team working, we are certainly changing more towards discussing the	Motivation	X	D
blems, trying to iron the problems out, investing in a problem if we felt its right rather than just saying it's your			
problem you know you sort it out we looking at it in investing time and money and resource into trying to solve that			
problem but you can understand in a big building like this there is only so many things you can do			
would spend more on improving the facilities, improving staff training, improving our customer service, as I said that	Resources	X	D
directly related to a customer services point here and at another facility			
rom what I have intimated previously that in terms of resources, human resources and even potentially hardware	Resources	X	C
stics as well, depending upon which way we choose to go, well we could say well we could go back to putting the			
ork to an advertising agency and get them to do it and get them to give us a cost for it But I know for a fact that they			
arge about £40 an hour for the work that I knock out at my rate which is probably about £10 and hour			
Ve were able to look down avenues that we couldn't before because the purse strings were very tight	Resources	X	C
ow do we identify development was the question wasn't it? (How do you achieve it, in its widest context?) We just	Resources	X	C
sure that we meet our objectives each year and that those objectives are a progression			
he staffing will probably cost £20k to £30k here at Kingsmead alone, because it is a three shift system, and that is	Resources	X	A
it employing a customer services person at all times			
he system, we are quality assured DSO, the bigger problem, the main problems that we have are with resources and	Resources	X	C
nited budgets so that means we are lower on human resources and lower on fundings for basic maintenance and			
vestment than we would like to be			
gain it's, can you explain "the system" any better to me, or my understanding of it is the organisation? (y) Again it's	Resources	X	C
financial constraints to keep our heads above water we have to do everything on the cheap I'm an example of that			
Ve did find at the end of the last tender that money was not so much of an object and life became easier and became I	Resources	X	D
ppose interesting, productive			
but it would be improving the department in human resources, hardware, software	Resources	X	D
again because it has been a survival exercise over the last couple of years things like that do, and other things tend to	Resources	X	D
ll by the wayside			
here have been problems with capital budgets, although I do have the flexibility to enter into partnership	Resources	X	A
rangements			
Ve would certainly look at employing a few more front line staff as well we would look at performance related pay, I	Resources	X	A
ink I do have the authority, I think that it's now a question of that we in surplus and working with the City Treasurer			
they appreciate now what we can give them as a return over the next 5 years which is perhaps greater that they saw			
the original 7 year plan, and now they are breathing a little bit more easily, now that first two years is out of the way			

leave that to the experts but all I do know from everything that I've learnt and been through and what people I liked with we are not putting enough resources into it, because of the constraints we've got	Resources	X	A
obviously there is a balance to be made between the financial pressures and the social pressures within the council as whole	Resources	X	B
o budget is an issue, I don't think it's a major issue here, I think it's the best use of those resources that's important.	Resources	X	B
o we are investing in the right way but there are obviously some constraints on us at the moment	Resources	X	B
at the end of the day it's whether you spend it on, there's a limited budget because our expenditure has to equate to our income and someone has to make a decision on whether we spend it on marketing or whether we spend it on advice or whether we spend it on equipment	Resources	X	B
mean again, because it's very difficult to assess financially the return, you know it can become a bottomless pit, and this building we really need to have some return on the resource put in	Resources	X	C
all I think we are investing heavily in what we are doing, we are reviewing what we are doing and I can see that it's going to be continued and continued on a regular basis	Resources	X	C
I have got the money I can spend it, if not then I will leave it to the following year So that's not a problem with that	Resources	X	C
ocal authority you know is almost obliged in to include in its operating costs, such as employee elements such as paid holiday, paid sick leave and the rest of it. So the effect of including those things in was a total depression on certain elements of variable cost	Resources	X	B
mean there is a substantial amount of operating latitude in the contract for the operator, as you are indeed almost obliged to give, but there is still the downward pressure on costs and so of the what you might see in terms of winning contract, soft costs, had to be eliminated	Resources	X	B
low having cut your cloth to that pattern, that's the pattern that you have got for the operating life of the contract	Resources	X	B
o, just to bring those two things together, there are a lot of physical drawbacks to the building and also the effect of not cutting if you like, has meant I think that our offer hasn't been developed and presented quite as well as it could have been	Resources	X	B
low, until we move from the CCT regime to whatever it is we are going to move to, we are probably only able to nip away the corners of it progressively	Resources	X	B
ell it's pretty much everything as far as Riverside is concerned it's customer driven, it's income driven. So unless we in deal with that effectively, the whole financial picture doesn't stack up	Resources	X	B
ell I think within a place like Riverside, obviously it is helpful to have adequate budgets	Resources	X	B
ou know, it's, bearing in mind, it's not free, cost's money, to the customer it costs money to us to operate it	Resources	X	B
ust like any bottom line driven organisation, you only price for the level of service that you can afford, and as long as you don't promote something in excess of that, then I think you are operating at about the right level	Resources	X	B
low that costs us more money but our proposition is that that's actually going to pay off at the end of the day because we can invest in them in terms of training	Resources	X	B
o other words they can't exceed their budget	Resources	X	B
o I would say that the "system" doesn't really help unless there is a major reason or a or a major change of politics if you like within the life of the contract would be the catalyst to make that happen.	Structure	X	B
im responsible for the management of the centre, my only constraints are the income coming in has to equate to the expenditure going out, at the end of the day we have to make a small surplus which we give to the authority	Structure	X	B
I particularly wanted a secretary then I could go out to an agency and buy a secretary, as long as my budgets at the end of the day balance then there is not a problem	Structure	X	B
would bring an assistant in, as I am doing it all on my own at the moment and since I came in I have also taken on another department so that actually that effectively means that a third of my time has been dropped to take on another department, and I really could do with an extra person being brought in so from my point of view it would bring an assistant in which would then provide me with the time to do things like, there is a lot of space, and if you have a walk around you will see there is a lot of space in the sports hall and places like that where advertising hoards could be sold	Structure	X	B
ight, my own background isn't a marketing background My experience is more in coming through and running leisure centres doing area managers roles, becoming the leader of the group	X	X	A
think we need to come out of what are quite short contract periods	Contract	X	A
o within Sport and Leisure DSO, that is the contracting unit of the City Council operate as a business so as such here we are actually looking that they will carry out all marketing functions that any business, private or public would carry out Somewhat different to what to the city council would want in the client role, but certainly as a contractor they would operate as any business would go, and that's all forms of marketing from TV, radio, paper etc	Definition	X	A
he bid that went in for the most recent contract that started two years ago meant that certain things had to be cut, or at they may not be done as well as we would have like to have, marketing being one of these We were on a very tight staffing structure so rather than having a marketing officer, dedicated completely to marketing, which we would ideally like, Neil Mason carries out a dual role whereby he has a contract deputy managers function to carry out core and the marketing role that we set down that we will try and achieve	Resources	X	A
ight I'd say that we've got a difficulty in the fact that the contract runs to a very tight budget	Resources	X	A
o again there the difficulty there is, in an ideal world pre CCT I believe a lot more was done marketing wise within Leisure Centres but because of budget constraints or bid prices then we have actually had to cut slightly what we do, and marketing is one of the ones that's fallen out on that	Resources	X	A
but obviously budget, the bids that we have put in for don't allow that or certainly don't allow that in the early years of the contract	Resources	X	A
Ve wouldn't get, I don't think we would necessarily get that returned in the 12 month period, but if it was my own business, I would have done that 2 years ago, the loss would have been greater at that time, we may not have produced surplus last year but we would certainly be producing a surplus next year and subsequent years and we do need to fend off competition	Resources	X	A
our budgets have to produce a return within a 12 month period	Resources	X	A
o, in that sense, as we said earlier, if the council were willing to let me do it, we could invest a million pounds in the customer services point, if within that 12 months it generated a million pound or million pound plus or very close to a million pound, so there are no problems with cash flow and to date there haven't been any problems with revenue budgets	Resources	X	A

